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THE ALMANACK FOR 1888,

WILL BE FOUND AT THE END OF THE VOLUME.

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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dams Durdan," "My Lord Concessit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER IV. ARE YOU FRIEND OR FOE?

THAT evening and the ensuing night had been passed by Adrian Lyle in tortures of indecision as to what was best to be done for Gretchen. Full well he knew that in her situation the friendship and assistance of any man would be liable to misconstruction. Bari's insults had hit home, and, even in the darkness of the night, a hot flush rose to his cheek as he thought of it.

No doubt she was right when she said she must go back to Dornbach; but when he thought of that cold and unlovely home; those rigid faces; that mass of bigotry and narrow-mindedness to which she must appeal; his heart sank within him, and the ordeal seemed too terrible a one for her to undergo.

Racked with pain, doubt, and misgiving, he never closed his eyes all through that dreadful night. With the first gleam of day he was up and out on the road to the cottage, longing, yet dreading, to behold the poor suffering girl. How had she passed those hours? What comfort or hope had come to her in the dark night-watches?

He thought of his own prayers on her behalf; of all the fervour and passion of his soul poured out before Heaven; of the bleeding agony of heart which he had carried to that altar of his faith; and then, sharp and cruel as the poison of doubt, there came to him the memory of a mocking voice, saying in its clear, cold music:

"That Power you call Divine is a very far-off and unapproachable thing. It rules

the world by laws which are not to be altered or controlled, and it seems the height of folly and presumption to suppose that any human prayer or human sorrow can effect an alteration that would be looked upon as individual benefit."

Was she right? Were faith and prayer alike useless, and were the laws of God so fixed and immutable that the sins of the guilty must fall upon the heads of the innocent?

He looked back upon the past—upon those first days of his meeting Kenyon and Gretchen, and the doubts which had then arisen. Why had he not spoken more emphatically? Why had he not warned Gretchen then, and left it to her to make her betrayer keep his promise? Kenyon had loved her then, and loved her well enough to yield to entreaties which now had lost their charm.

He had simply wearied of her; perhaps conscience had been capable of stinging him with self-reproach in her presence, and so he had seized eagerly upon that excuse of going abroad, and had trusted to time to soften the blow whose fall he must have determined even then. The guilt and misery of this sad history grew more and more distinct to Adrian Lyle's mind; its every detail and incident were clearly illumined by that light which past doubts shed upon present knowledge.

Yet the intense pity he felt for Gretchen and Gretchen's sufferings, dwarfed every other feeling. That pity gave him strength in this hour of his own weakness; strength to comfort and befriend her at any cost to himself; strength for self-mastery as he drew nearer and nearer to her dwelling and knew that he must once again face her in her misery, and sustain her in her helplessness.

He found himself at the gate of the cottage while still these thoughts were in his mind, and his soul was struggling to lift itself in brief petition for help in this hour of weakness and of need.

Then he lifted the latch and entered the garden:

The cottage was all dark and silent, and he scarcely dared knock for admission. Perhaps she might be asleep. Yet even as the hope crossed his mind, the door was suddenly flung back, and he found himself confronted by a stranger.

The apparition was so unexpected that he drew back a step, unable to frame any enquiry. A stately figure; a proud, calm face; eyes that seemed to leap into sudden life and hold his own, and yet, while so holding them, recall a swift and breathless memory. This was what he saw as his stammering lips at last broke their chain of silence and faltered out the name which was in itself a mockery.

The face before him grew paler than before; but all the suppressed passion and fear of the proud heart spoke out in the beautiful eyes, and in the broken whisper of the quivering lips. "She is not here. She has fled away in the night. Are you a friend? Have you brought any news?"

She was close to him, trembling with eagerness and almost it seemed with terror; close to him, and again that swift strange thought flashed through his brain, and left him startled and confused.

"I am a friend—yes——" he said, looking, wondering at that agitated face. "Surely you cannot mean she is not here. Where could she go? She knows no one."

The woman drew back a step. "Come into the house," she said briefly, and Adrian Lyle followed her.

The beating of his heart was so swift and violent, that it was almost pain. Involuntarily he laid his hand upon it and so stood there in the grey dull light, waiting to hear what was to follow.

"You are her friend," went on the voice hurriedly and brokenly. "Thank Heaven she had one. Can you give me any clue as to where she has gone? I—I am her only relative now. I learnt she was here. I came over from Vienna last night. I was prepared to take her home—to her old childish home once more. I told her so. This morning, she was not in the house."

"Not in the house!" faltered Adrian Lyle. "Are you sure—are you quite sure? It was but yesterday she told me

that she was going back to you—to her old home at Dornbach, and you were sure to receive her. Why should she have gone away?"

The proud cold, face grew strangely agitated. "I—I fear we were too severe," she faltered.

"We——!" echoed Adrian Lyle, looking round doubtfully.

"I, and the Sister of the Convent at Dornbach. She wished to receive the child back as of old had been determined."

"And she would not go?" questioned Adrian Lyle eagerly.

"No; she said so last night. But she was ill, fevered, and distraught, and scarce knew of what she spoke. I left her calmly asleep. Half-an-hour ago I went to her room: she was not there; her cloak and hat were gone; everything was in disorder, as if she had prepared for flight. That is all I know."

"And the Sister, where is she?"

"In her room, asleep. She does not know yet."

Adrian Lyle felt sick with sudden horror. Fevered, distraught, knowing her own disgrace, seeing her last hope of love and shelter failing, what desperate deed might the girl not have committed?

The foreboding of evil was too strong to be resisted. White and shaking, he leant against the table for support, and vainly tried to frame some rational excuse for this unaccountable action. "May I see her room?" he faltered at last. Without a word, his companion rose and led the way.

His eyes seemed to take in everything. The bed where she had slept; the open press; the little slippers thrown carelessly beside a chair; the window from which, on that memorable June night, she had leaped to speak to him.

"Yes, she must have gone away," he said slowly; and his voice sounded strange to himself, and there was that in his face which called Anna von Waldstein's attention to it, and held it fixed and wondering for many moments.

During those moments Adrian Lyle was living over again every detail of his love for Gretchen—its folly, its impossibility, its despair. What his face betrayed, he never imagined; but the eyes that watched it grew strangely soft, and the calm voice shook as she said: "You cared for her, too. Did you know her story?"

"I learnt it," he said, "but yesterday."

"And she—she was right in what she said," exclaimed Anna von Waldstein

brokenly, "that man deceived her all this time."

"He deceived me also," said Adrian Lyle. "He swore that she was his wife."

"Then . . . it was not her fault—"

"Her fault!" he cried passionately; "you, to ask that! You, who know all the purity and innocence of that lovely nature! You, to whose cruelty and coldness she owes her present sufferings! You, who would have condemned her to that death in life which only a bigoted faith calls holy—her fault!"

His voice broke—his self-command had all forsaken him. The catastrophe that had now happened was the one thing he had not expected, and was utterly unprepared for. These harsh and bigoted guardians had terrified the poor distraught girl into an act, whose result he dared not contemplate. He could not reason calmly any longer. The restraint, which he had put upon himself for her sake, was but a feeble reed against the torrent of passionate dread and longing and despair which now swept over his heart.

He turned away from the little chamber; it was filled with haunting voices, and memories more terrible still.

At the door a figure barred his progress . . . the figure of the Sister whose description he had heard long ago from Gretchen's laughing lips.

That sight—those stern, forbidding features, and passionless cruel eyes—seemed to set the seal of certainty upon his suspicions.

For a moment he paused and looked back at the questioning face, and from that to the bowed and shuddering figure which cowered in dumb agony on the chair which had once held Gretchen's form.

"You have done your Christian work very effectually," he said. "Think well of what your answer will be, when the God whom you profess to serve demands at your hands the young and suffering soul you have this day sent out to its destruction!"

Then he passed from the room and from the house, scarce knowing what he did, or whither he went.

Left alone the two women looked at each other. The one face amazed and indignant; the other shaken from all its proud calm and composure, agonised, humiliated, despairing, as one who looks on a lost hope.

"We were too hard on her," she cried brokenly—"too hard. She was so young."

"What has happened?" cried the Sister. "Who was that man? He looked like an English priest. What does he know of Gretchen?"

"He was her friend," answered that broken voice. "But she has fled even from him."

"Fled?" faltered the Sister. "Do you mean that she is not here?"

"No."

"But where has she gone? Why should she have fled from us?"

The proud face raised itself and looked back at its questioner. "Why? Can you not guess? What did we offer her that should in any way tempt her to such a home! . . . such a home! Oh, Heaven!" she murmured, falling on her knees and hiding her face in her shuddering hands, "why did I not let my heart speak as it would? . . . I might have saved her. . . . I might have held her safe in my empty arms this hour!"

"Your heart!" dropped in cold scorn from the frigid lips of the Sister. "Do you forget its secret? . . . its vows . . . its penance self-entailed from the hour its guilt was known?"

"No!" she cried amidst her broken sobs. "I have never been allowed to forget them for one moment of my miserable life."

"It is your penance."

"A penance more bitter than death, more cruel than human injustice."

"Your sin was great . . . so need be your atonement. This girl . . . brought forth in shame, the child of sin . . . has but obeyed her natural instincts. You at least have done your duty . . . that should ease your heart and satisfy your conscience. Vile, wilful, contumacious, she has chosen her own path. Let her go. From this hour the Church she has wantonly forsaken closes its doors upon her. We have done all we could do. Again I say, 'Let her go!'"

There was a moment's silence. Then—calm, resolute, with the intensity of a fixed resolve, beautiful with the softness of human love, that at last had found power to overthrow the cruelty and oppression of long restraint—that white, proud face of Anna von Waldstein raised itself and looked back at the woman who had been to her the representative of conscience and Heaven for long and bitter years.

What it was that had come to her in this moment; that gave her so strange a strength, so calm a resolution; she neither knew nor

stayed to question. It was there, within her, flashing the light of truth on long darkness; breaking with its new and vivid force the chains of long bondage.

"I have listened to you," she said tranquilly. "You say that through you the Church you obey so blindly has spoken. It is for you then to attend to its behests. But another voice speaks to me—the one voice to which I have been condemned to turn deaf ears for so long and weary a time. It is the voice of human life. I will seek this poor child through the length and breadth of the world, but I will find her and comfort her, and tell her that one heart loves her despite sin, and folly, and weakness. Together we will live our lives as we have never been permitted to live them yet; together we have suffered, together shall love and pity bind our broken hearts. What comfort has your cold creed ever given me? What did it do for her? Only turned her yearning heart to the deceitful promises of human love; only leaves her now outcast, helpless, and betrayed! If she has fled, ours were the hands which drove her forth; if she has sought the last refuge that the desolate and broken-hearted seek, then on our heads is the guilt of human blood, and Heaven will seek her life at our hands."

As the passionate words rang out the Sister grew white and rigid with mingled terror and wrath.

"This is blasphemous," she faltered. "I must not listen to such words. The Spirit of Evil must surely have entered into your soul before you could speak thus of holy things."

"I care not," answered Anna von Waldstein vehemently. "I have borne; I have struggled; I have suffered. I can do so no more. Go your way; let me go mine. The worst is over. I have naught to fear and little to hope. I cannot suffer more than I have suffered, and I can bear no more than what I have borne."

"You may have to bear more, O rash and headstrong fool," hissed the fierce, low voice of the amazed and wrathful Sister. "I have your secret—do you forget?"

There was no fear in the proud eyes, only defiance—haughty, fierce, stormy with the passion of a heart too long controlled, and yet uncrushed and undisciplined still, taking vengeance at last for years of silence and repression.

"You—have—my—secret," she said slowly and distinctly. "What need to tell

me that? I do not fear its betrayal any longer. You may use it as you please."

Sister Maria drew back, pale with anger and amazement. Was this weapon to be powerless now? What had come to the woman whose law she had been, whose conscience she had scourged?

"I will take you at your word," she said vindictively. "To-morrow I shall be at Dornbach. The good people there will be glad to know at last the true history of the proud and virtuous Anna von Waldstein."

Then the door closed. Anna von Waldstein stood there erect and disdainful; listening to the echo of retreating steps; feeling as if the whole fabric of her life were falling in ruins around her.

A strange look came into her eyes. Was it fear or defiance? It might have been both, though the proud heart beat so steadily, though the calm face neither paled, nor flushed with emotion.

Slowly she dropped on her knees once more, her clasped hands raised to Heaven.

The uplifted eyes grew dim with blinding tears; the quivering lips were rent with agonised sighs; the proud breast throbbed with sobs that nothing could control or restrain. Never in all the hours of agony through which she had passed, had Anna von Waldstein touched the supreme point of agony and despair as she touched it now.

Yet the iron force of will and self-control came to her aid even in this terrible hour. The storm died away, the tears ceased to flow, the passionate sobs no longer racked the tortured breast. White, calm, resolute, she rose at last and faced the duty upon which she had resolved.

With her own hands she arranged the disordered room, smoothing the bed, replacing the articles of clothing thrown so carelessly about. Then she closed the press and locked it; drew down the blind; went downstairs and called the old serving woman to her.

"Your mistress has gone away for a time," she said quietly. "But she is coming back again with me. You will take care of the house and keep it as it is, ready for her at any time. Do you understand?"

"Ay, I understand," grumbled the old woman. "Strange enough goings on there be here, that I'm fain to say. But I know my duty, and I'll do it when I'm bid—have no fear of that, mistress."

"That is well," was the answer; and Anna von Waldstein turned away, and

took her cloak and bonnet from the stand in the hall and put them on mechanically.

She stood for a moment or two on the threshold lost in thought.

A strange light and radiance were on her face as she lifted it to the cold grey sky. Her lips moved, and one breathless, voiceless prayer went up to Heaven which surely might have won response.

Then she went forth, resolute and calm, on the first stage of that journey she had set herself, neither hastening nor faltering, unknowing its end, yet determined in its purpose. A lonely figure in a sad, cold world, indifferent to all save individual concerns.

A lonely figure, holding a dread beyond all words in its beating heart; a yearning dumb and tearless, yet full of pathos, in the mournful eyes in which all pride was quenched.

A figure which through the long, dark, stormy day, pursued its quest with patient and untiring zeal, yet all without result; a figure which stood trembling and solitary still, in the glow of the stormy sunset, gazing with terrified eyes at the sluggish waters of the river, creeping away between the low, flat lines of shore.

What secret did it whisper as the dusk crept on apace, and the mysterious current flowed silently by into the mist and gloom of the falling night? What voice, stealthy as its own murmur, floated to the ear of the lonely watcher, to deepen her despair, to weight anew with agonised remorse the once proud heart?

What memories rose like winged shapes, and crowded thick and fast about that quiet bank, peopling it with mysterious shadows, impalpable, voiceless, yet clear and terrible to the watcher, who gazed down, always down, where the murky waters flowed?

Shapes of childhood, tender and appealing; a little figure fitting to and fro amidst grim and desolate rooms; a laugh like music; the fragment of a song; eyes closed in the innocence of a child's slumbers. Then they changed, those strange shadows, and a girl's appealing face looked back from them; a young life martyred and condemned found voice of reproach, and sighed to the desolate air: "No one loves me, or desires me." . . . Oh, to recall those years! Oh, to hold the childish head to her bosom, and pour out love unchecked and unconstrained to the desolate young heart!

But Fate, relentless as Doom, pointed with iron finger onwards to the Future, re-

gardless of remorse that came too late for atonement.

So the sun went down on the darkness of that miserable day, shedding no light on the mystery and darkness of Gretchen's fate.

VIOLINS AND THEIR MAKERS.

It is a far cry from the smoky hut beneath whose shelter our wood-stained ancestors chipped their flints and moulded their rude pottery, to the well-appointed and æsthetic habitation of the Victorian era. But Rome was not built in a day, neither were the manifold comforts and conveniences of domestic architecture—the fireplaces, chimneys, and glazed windows—of other than gradual and successive introduction; and so also was it with the "King of instruments," the violin, which, without investigating its remoter ancestry, has been gradually evolved and developed from the "jocund rebec" of L'Allegro, the primitive stringed instrument of mediæval Europe. "To perfect that wonder of travel, the locomotive," says Mr. Gladstone, "has perhaps not required the expenditure of more mental strength and application, than to perfect that wonder of music—the violin." In shape somewhat resembling half a pear, and so popular with the peasantry that it was rasped at every rustic revel, the rebec had usually three strings of gut supported on a bridge and played with a bow: such an instrument was employed by Henry the Eighth in his State band. A modification of the rebec was the crowth, which appears to have continued in use in Wales until comparatively recent times; a box-shaped instrument, in form an oblong square, consisting of a back and face connected by low ribs or sides. From the crowth and from the rotta, a kind of guitar without bridge or bow, were derived the viola, which, towards the close of the fourteenth century, were made in great profusion at Venice, Bologna, and Mantua. Thus, there was the Viol da Braccio, resting on the knee; the Viol d'Amour, with strings of wire passing through the bridge and tuned in unison with those passing over it; and the Viol da Gamba, which derived its name from being held between the legs. Next, by degrees, the shape of the tubby, feeble-toned viol also underwent conversion: the flat, guitar-like front became rounded into a gentle arc;

the side curves received corners, the better to resist the strain of the bridge; the sound-holes, from being semicircular, assumed the shape of *f*; the handle became narrow and rounded; the finger-board extended over the front and was raised; the guitar frets, marking at intervals along the neck the length of string required to produce a given note, were abolished; and the violin finger-board was created.

Brescia was the cradle of Italian violin making, and it was there, in the workshop of Gaspar di Salo (1560—1610) who was born in the little town of that name on the Lake of Garda, and was the first to develop what was before but a rude craft into an art, that the violin with four strings, corresponding to the fourfold classification of voices, was originally made. His instruments are now rarely to be met with; but at a *conversazione* of the London Musical Society in St. James's Hall in 1862, the famous Gaspar di Salo, known as the "Treasury Violin" of Innsbruck, with the scroll carved by Benvenuto Cellini, was exhibited by Ole Bull. After the assault of the city by the French in 1809, the Museum was looted, and the violin carried off to Vienna, where it was sold for a mere trifle by a soldier to the Councillor Rhehazek, who bequeathed it to the Norwegian musician in 1842.

Whether Andreus Amati, founder of the Cremona school, was a pupil of the Brescia makers or not, from Brescia came the masters who established at Cremona the manufactory wherein the art of violin making was brought to highest perfection by Stradivari and Guarneri. But of all the Amatis, Nicolas (born 1596), the grandson of Andreus, was the greatest; and in his workshop, between the years 1667 and 1679, it is probable that Antonius Stradivarius, the foremost name that has been associated with the lutiist's art, applied himself with loving industry. So recently as 1786, a descendant of the Amatis engaged himself as a workman at Orleans, and his violins were much admired; but he resigned his place rather than divulge the secret of his varnish, nor was it ever known what afterwards became of him.

It was essentially a creative age when the violin-making craft thus leaped swiftly and surely to perfection. The long list of honoured names connected with Art in Italy during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, is indeed a mighty roll-call. Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, and Tintoretto were at work upon

their great canvases; Maestro Giorgio was intent upon the production of his imitable Majolica; Venetians, with unrecorded names, were blowing glass of wondrous form and beauty: Corelli was composing gigue and sarabandes; Tartini dreaming his "Trille del Diavolo"; and Viotti, originator of the school of modern violin playing, was beginning to write his concertos. Thus closely did the perfection of the violin maker's art follow on the rise of music in Italy, and upon the era of the masterpieces of Italian painting.

Let us glance for a moment at some of the great masters of the Cremona school. Between the days of Gaspar di Salo and those of Antonius Stradivarius (born at Cremona about 1650) an entire century passed away, during which the main outlines of the violin had, by degrees, become determined, and the tone, though still remaining dull and muffled, had also correspondingly improved. Of Stradivari little enough is certainly known, save that for half a century he carried on his business at the house now No. 1, Piazza Roma, where, at the age of eighty-seven or eighty-eight, in December, 1737, he passed away, and his remains were laid to rest in the adjacent Church of S. Domenico, whence they have since been removed to the cemetery of Cremona. Ceaselessly did he toil from youth to age, for the perfection of the instrument he loved. The world to him, it has been said, was one vast workshop. The fair forests which shaded the western slopes of the Swiss mountains possessed no beauty in his eyes save that they grew maple for the backs of violins. What though Cremona were in the dog days but little better than an oven, was not the heat good to dry the wood for violins? The fruit of the vine rejoiced the heart of man; but was not the spirit, which mixed the varnish for the wood of violins, its most precious ingredient? Oxen were strong to labour, and the horse was prepared against the day of battle; but was it not their chief glory to furnish strings for violins, and hairs for the bow, and glue?

Twenty years he laboured, when meditation and experiment at length bore their fruit, and with his fiftieth year hand and eye attained supreme strength and freedom, so that his handiwork became a thing of beauty and almost a joy for ever. Every violin bridge in the world stands forth a monument to the great artist who so fixed its shape and details that neither may be

changed without injury to the tone of the instrument. No hand was as cunning as his to insert so deftly the thread-like pieces of purfling—two of ebony, the centre one of sycamore—which served to border the edge of his violins.

Here were no whited sepulchres with dead men's bones within. A good violin resembles a good watch, in that its works must be of perfect materials and accurately fitted together; and the great master's work is no less exact within than without. Here are no uneven blocks, no lumps of glue, no scratches, nor the shadow of roughness, the framework and lining being made of willow from the banks of the Po. Varnish within there is none; but the exterior is coated with composition resembling a sheet of transparent agate, the secret of whose manufacture is lost to the world as completely as that of the glorious ruby lustre of Giorgio, or the blue so coveted by connoisseurs of china. Anxious days and nights have been devoted to searching for this hidden treasure, but despair has finally succeeded to energetic enquiry, and the varnish of Cremona is surrendered as one of the lost arts.

The life of Stradivari was peaceful as his calling. The year 1702, when Cremona was captured by Marshal Villeroy and retaken by Prince Eugène, may have caused him a measure of disquiet; but after that there was for Italy a long era of tranquillity, in which the old age of the artist glided calmly away.

Polledro, not so long ago first violin in the royal orchestra at Turin, used to say that his master, Pugnani, born only ten years before Stradivari's death, could remember him and often spoke of him. He was, he said, tall and thin, with a bald head fringed with silvery hair, covered with a cap of white wool in the winter and of cotton in the summer. Over his clothes he wore an apron of white leather, and, as his violins sold for four golden livres a piece, and he spent nothing save on the necessities of life and the essentials of his trade, he acquired what passed for wealth in the days in which his lot was cast, so that, "rich as Stradiuarus," became a proverb among the Cremona folk. George Eliot probably delineates his life accurately enough:

That plain, white-aproned man, who stood at work,
Patient and accurate, full fourscore years,
Cherished his sight and touch by temperance;
And since keen sight is love of perfectness,
Made perfect violins, the needed paths
For inspiration and high mastery.

The relics of Stradivari's workshop were carefully preserved in his family for nearly thirty years, and are said to be now in the possession of a Piedmontese nobleman, the Marquis Rolando della Valle. Representatives of the family yet reside in Cremona, and the grandson of the great master became a distinguished physician, whose name is still held in renown among the Cremonese. At the present time, a common price for a fine Strad is from one hundred to five hundred guineas; but in the last century, Cervetto, an Italian musician in London, is said to have returned a consignment of Stradivari's fiddles which had been sent to him for disposal, being unable to obtain the price asked, which was only four pounds.

Joseph Guarnerius, called Joseph del Gesù, from the sacred monogram added to his name on his labels, is only held in less admiration than Stradivari. He was born at Cremona 1683, and died 1745; in his latter years, it is said, he became dissipated, and so his instruments fell off in excellence of quality and workmanship. Many of them are reported to have been made while he was in prison with inferior material supplied by the jailor's daughter, who admired the handsome captive; but it has been conjectured that the story of the "prison Josephs" may have been invented to explain the hosts of spurious instruments which have made their way over Europe since the middle of last century. Paganini's favourite violin was a Guarnerius, which he bequeathed to his native town of Genoa, where it is preserved in a glass case in the Municipal Palace, and Spohr offered to exchange his Strad, one of the finest in the world, for a Guarnerius in the possession of an English musician. It was not without opposition that the names of Cremona's two most famous violin makers were recently conferred on two streets leading out of the Piazza Roma, the "Via Guarnerieri" and the "Corso Stradivari."

There was yet another maker who enjoyed in England, at any rate, a reputation equal to the artists of Cremona, Jacob Stainer (1621-1683), who, it is said, came from the Tyrol to work under the Amatis, and marrying the daughter of Anthony Amati, retired to his native town of Absam. The story is told that on the death of his wife he entered a Benedictine Convent, where, towards the close of his life, he made the famous instruments which he presented to the twelve Electors. Three

of these are known to survive; and a glimpse at one of the exquisite "Elector Stainers," as they are termed, is said to be a never-fading memory. A curious history has been told of a Stainer violin, for which, many years ago, the father of General Morgan Neville, of Cincinnati, gave one thousand five hundred acres of land, at the time worth a dollar an acre, upon which, however, a large portion of the flourishing City of Pittsburg has since been built. Stainer grew insane in his later years, and was confined to his house at Absom, where the wooden bench to which he was chained may still be seen. Tradition says that as he walked through the forests, he would carry a sledge hammer in his hand, with which he was wont to strike the trunks of the trees, that so he might test their resonance. The extraordinary duration of the life of Stradivari will account for the great number of instruments (some thousands or so are said to be still existing), reputed to have been made by him. The highest price ever given for a violin, unless we take the present value of the land handed over as above mentioned for the Stainer instrument, was for a Strad. The violin referred to was sold in 1856 for literally more than its weight in gold, as on weighing it, the price paid was discovered to be at the rate of nearly forty pounds per ounce.

From the earliest application of the traditions of viol making to the construction of instruments of the violin type, an independent school of makers existed in London. When, however, the duties on foreign musical instruments were removed, the effect was to swamp the little band of English fiddle makers, among whom may be named Duke, Banks, Forster, and the Youngs (father and son), thus immortalised by Purcell, in the first volume of his "Catches":

You scrapers that want a good fiddle, well strung,
You must go the man that is old while he's young;
But if this same fiddle you fain would play bold,
You must go to his son, who'll be young when he's old.

There's old Young and young Young, both men of renown,
Old sells, and young plays, the best fiddles in town;
Young and old live together, and may they live long,
Young, to play an old fiddle; old, to sell a new song.

The Cremona makers of the best period were no less remarkable for beauty of workmanship than charm of tone; and the violin, as modelled by their hands, has hitherto baffled all attempts to force it into the march of progress which most things,

in these brisk and giddy-paced times, seems destined to follow. The sole difference between the creation of the sixteenth century and that of the nineteenth lies in increased length of sound bar—the nervous system, as it may be termed, of the violin—in order to adapt it to the increased pressure of the higher pitch, equivalent to a weight of about ninety pounds on the front of the instrument. Though violins are, doubtless, improved by age and use, the excellence depends mainly upon the nature and direction of the curves, and upon the thickness and density of the wood of which the instruments are fashioned; for the back, sides, and neck, sycamore or maple have been commonly selected, and for the finger-board and tail-piece, ebony; a light, soft, porous wood, such as deal, being chosen for the front, in order that the quicker vibration of the sound-board may mingle, in the hollow of the instrument, with the slower vibrations of the back. Nor must we omit to mention the sound-post, stuck upright inside the violin, just beneath the bridge, which exercises the important function of combining and mixing the pulsations, and has hence received the name of the "heart of the violin." The sides or ribs also call for notice, regulating, as they do, the height of the instrument and the amount of its air-bearing capacity, upon which intensity of sound so materially depends; they are formed, like the back, of maple or sycamore, and are in six pieces, bent to the required form by means of a heated iron.

The violin, when complete, consists of fifty-eight different parts, and when twenty-four bits instead of twelve are used for the purfling, and the tail-piece is made in two portions, the total number of pieces extends to seventy-one. Up to the middle of the seventeenth century the bow was short and clumsy, without any screw to pull the horse-hair tight; Tartini, 1730, effected the first improvement by making it more elastic, and giving to it a backward instead of a forward curve. It was not, however, until the middle of the eighteenth century that François Tourté, of Paris (1747-1835)—the Stradivari of the bow—finally brought it to the degree of perfection needed to enable Paganini to revolutionise the whole art of violin-playing.

It remains to notice briefly some of the circumstances attendant upon the introduction of the violin into this country. Though this was effected somewhat by

Royal patronage, the superior handiness of its shape was by no means slow to commend itself, as the following verse shows :

In former days we had the *viol* in,
Ere the true instrument had come about ;
But now we say, since this all ears doth win,
The violin hath put the *viol* out.

The "peerless Oseana," who is recorded to have been musical "so far forth as might become a Princess," was in the habit of dancing to it ; and from a ballad of the time of Charles the First, we find that the art of violin playing was almost a feminine accomplishment, for we read of a wife possessed of numerous good qualities, and among them that :

She sings, and she plays,
And she knows all the keys
Of the viol de gambo, or lute.

But when Charles the Second introduced his celebrated

Four-and-twenty fiddlers, all of a row. in imitation of a similar band at the French Court, the instrument rose in general estimation. Ere long the anthems and services in the Chapel Royal were sung to the music of violins instead of the ancient wind instruments, and Evelyn complains of their French fantastical, light way of playing there. Pepys, who was in the habit of frequenting musical parties as well as theatres, could not only sing at sight, but was a practised performer on the lute and violin. Thus November 21, 1660, he writes, "At night to my viallin (the first time that I have played on it since come to this house) in my dining-roome, and afterwards to my lute there, and I took much pleasure to have the neighbours come forth into the yard to hear me." December 3rd, "Rose by candle, and spent my morning in fiddling till time to go to the office." Occasionally, also he would solace his wife's domestic labours with melody, for April 12th, 1669, we read, "Home, and after sitting awhile, thrumming upon my viall, and singing, I to bed, and left my wife to do something to a waistcoat and petticoat she is to wear to-morrow ;" and on Coronation Day, 23rd April, 1661, he took a great deal of pleasure "in going up and down to look upon the ladies, and to hear the musique of all sorts ; but above all, the twenty-four violins."

Mace, in his quaint book, "Musick's Monument," 1675, gives amusing directions for the care of the lute, which he would probably extend to the whole violin race. He recommends that in the daytime the lute be put into a bed that is constantly

used, between the rug and the blanket, but never between the sheets, because they may be moist. It will save the strings from breaking, and keep the lute in good order. He adds, however, this somewhat superfluous advice, that no person must be so inconsiderate as to tumble down on the bed whilst it is there, as he had known "several spoilt with such a trick."

Cremona violins, at this time, fetched a high price, as we find that one of His Majesty's musicians, by warrant dated twenty-fourth of October, 1662, received an order for forty pounds for two such instruments which had been bought by him.

HOSPITAL LIFE IN EAST LONDON.

THE population of the Eastern District of London numbers nearly a million, and largely consists of seamen, workers in the docks and manufactories, and general labourers. It is these people who seek the relief of the hospitals in their midst ; who, when dying from disease engendered by overcrowding, or struck down by some sudden accident while following their trade, are carried to the hospital doors and taken in and tended. Eight thousand in-patients and eighty thousand out-patients is not an unusual yearly record for our largest hospitals, and amongst such numbers one naturally comes across a few queer characters. As a rule, however, the patients are all quiet, good-humoured, grateful, and poor. Men and women who have often known want but never luxury, whose lives have been essentially hard-working and needy, here find a certain amount of peace and comfort during periods of bodily pain, and even enjoy their residence in the wards. Cases of shamming in order to obtain admittance to a hospital are by no means unknown, and one man who, for no perceptible reason, refused to use his limbs, in spite of galvanic and electric shocks, had finally to be carried out, and left on the pavement till cold and hunger gave him the power to move, and he slunk away home. On the other hand, there are many people who strongly object to the discipline it is necessary to maintain. Regularity, order, and cleanliness are so foreign to their ordinary habits, that nothing can make them happy in a hospital, the final grievance always being that they are expected to sleep in a room where there is an open window.

But if the poor are sometimes troublesome, the only rich patient I ever came across was far more vexatious. He was an old bachelor living alone in Gray's Inn, and had been run over and seriously injured just outside the hospital. A friend who saw the accident brought him in to us, and he was put to bed while still insensible. When he recovered consciousness he angrily demanded why he, "a private individual," had been brought into that public place to be stared at by a lot of mangled men, and treated like a baby by a pack of women. The surgeon managed to impress on him that his only hope of ever walking again depended on absolute quiet for a time, and that as soon as possible he should be moved to a private ward.

The other patients soon named the new comer "My Lord Duke," a cognomen of which he was luckily not cognizant, or his irascibility would have been increased. When, in the darkness of a winter's morning, a young probationer aroused My Lord Duke, and kindly washed his face and hands, and then gave him a basin of bread and milk, his indignation knew no bounds. Dinner at twelve and no meat for supper were other occasions of complaint.

To the surprise of all, at the end of a few days, My Lord Duke settled down quietly, and no longer asked about private wards, or grumbled at the diet. His nerves were evidently recovering the shock of the accident, and there seemed every reason to hope he was making a complete recovery. It was the young probationer who, however, interpreted the true reason of this sudden silence; she gathered from certain gloomy hints that My Lord Duke was making an experiment of which he was his own victim, and that he was "takin' notes," and meant, when well, to go forth and expose to the world at large the rottenness and corruption of the present hospital system. Luckily a marvellous cure, constant care, and unfailing courtesy, at last completely converted My Lord Duke to a belief in the usefulness of the hospital, and on his departure he gave a munificent subscription to the institution, and acknowledged that, apart from the recovery of his injuries, he had benefited, mentally and in general health, from his stay within its walls.

A perfect contrast to the above patient was a broad, good-humoured Irishman, who was admitted with several broken ribs and an injured hand. According to his own ac-

count he was a drayman, who had fallen from his cart; but from certain words that were overheard about "a damaging rally," we have our own private opinion about the true profession of Patsy. As a patient he was all that could be desired; he never grew irritable under suffering, or gave expression to pain when under operation; he was always content, cheerful, and obliging; grateful to the doctors, and polite to the nurses. As soon as he was allowed to get up for a few hours daily, he helped in the ward work to the best of his power; waited on the other patients; washed up the tea-things; and trotted up and down the ward with bare feet, performing various errands. It was no use for the nurse to provide Patsy with shoes; he might carry them about in his hand, but wear them he would not; he said he could not stand safe in them. Neither could Patsy be persuaded to walk; he always trotted with a springy gait; and a queer-looking figure he was, clothed in a red dressing-gown and moving clumsily about the ward. In the evening—when two or three of the patients approaching convalescence used to gather round the fire—Patsy told stories of the most thrilling nature. His imagination used sometimes to run away with him, and then another patient, nicknamed the Schoolmaster, would take Patsy to task.

"No tree ever stood for two thousand years, Patsy," he remarked once, after a very wild statement.

"This tree did; don't be for spoilin' the story wid yer cantankerousness."

"But it is impossible, Patsy; you mean two hundred years."

"I mane two thousand years. It was exactly thin the tree was planted in County Kerry. I saw it planted wid me very own eyes. Now will ye be for denyin' it?"

Amidst shouts of laughter Patsy continued his story, and the Schoolmaster dared to say no more. About a week after Patsy was dismissed cured, he was seen entering the hospital bearing a wooden case under his arm. He went straight to his old ward, and, having found the nurse who had attended to him, put the box at her feet, and explained that it contained some bloaters for her tea. One hundred fine strong bloaters were unpacked from the case, and the odour of fish pervaded that part of the hospital for days.

A most unsatisfactory patient was a comparatively young man, who never secured a nickname, but was always known as "Thirty,"

that being the number of his bed. His case was diagnosed simply "phthisis," and it was a matter of wonder to many why an incurable and consumptive man was admitted to the general wards. The peculiar point about Thirty was his quietness and silence, which seemed to contradict the fiery, passionate eyes which looked forth from his pale face. He never gave any trouble, always did as he was bid, and appeared quite content, except that his weird, hazel eyes ever roved restlessly around the ward, and seemed to express implacable protest against the fate which confined him there. In vain the physician asked if there was anything he could do for Thirty; if there were no friends to be sent for. A simple negative met all offers of sympathy or help, and in silent scorn or disdain of the pain that was eating his life away, Thirty lay still and suffered. The mere outlines of his history, which the clinical clerk dragged from unwilling but truthful lips, were a record of a sinful life. Thirty had done evil, and his faults had found him out. One morning Thirty was observed putting the ice, given him to suck, on his head. On being questioned, he admitted that his head was hot, and ached. His temperature was also rising. By night he was very feverish and slightly delirious. The next day the "Chief" came to see Thirty, and pronounced it a case of meningitis. A screen was placed round the bed, a special nurse procured, and the fatal disease sped through the usual rapid stages. Yet even in his ravings Thirty was subdued, and uttered no articulate words save "oh dear! oh dear!" which he reiterated at regular intervals in a tone of pained perplexity. The address he had given on entering the hospital was merely that of some lodging-house, and all efforts to find his friends were futile. Yet he was undoubtedly of a higher class than the usual run of patients, and somewhere there must have been at least one who loved this man. But in his pride he had decreed to face death with sealed lips, and in utter loneliness his short, sad life came to an end.

Children are generally an element of brightness and innocence in hospital life; they so easily forget past pain, are ready to be amused, and willing to return the love expended upon them. Yet even amongst the little ones there are sometimes patients who seem hopelessly degraded, for whom it appears impossible to desire anything but death. Such a one was "Tommy,"

a little imp who was banished from the children's ward as too mischievous to be retained there any longer, and was therefore supplied with a crib amongst the men. Tommy was by nature of his malady excitable, and the students delighted in making faces at the weird little creature till his shrill laughter rang through the ward. Tommy seldom spoke save to jerk out an oath, and his delight was in destruction. If he could reach a flower or catch a fly, he pulled either to pieces with equal unconcern, and both counterpane and crib bore marks of his mischievous propensities. When the nurse was attending to him she had to keep a careful watch, or a bite or scratch would repay her ministrations; even after a two months' residence, when his malady was much better, he showed no signs of gratitude or affection to those who had cared for him so long.

We must take one specimen from the out-patients, before we turn to view another side of hospital life. An undersized woman, who looks fifty but is probably five-and-twenty, takes her turn to leave the crowd sitting on forms in the big hall, and comes before the surgeon. She wears a heavy fringe above her meagre face, and over that is a large hat with a long soiled white feather dragging down behind. A dirty tie with gorgeous ends is round her neck, and over her shoulders is a faded shawl. The surgeon knows the woman well; she lives with a brute of a man who is always ill-treating her, yet nothing will persuade her to bear witness against him. She comes again and again with poor excuses to account for her injuries, and if her word is to be believed, she is a constant victim of the most extraordinary accidents.

"How did you get that black eye?" sternly demands the surgeon.

"A blow, sir."

"A blow? what from?"

"A fist, sir."

The dresser and nurse cannot help smiling, but the surgeon is serious, and bent on extracting the truth from the woman.

"Whose fist gave that blow?" he continues in magisterial tones.

"I don't know 'is name, sir."

"Oh! It was some stranger hit out at you by chance, was it?"

"'E was quarrelling in the street, and I were looking on, and 'e 'it me instead of the woman wot was crossing 'im."

"Indeed! You expect me to believe that?"

The woman began to whimper.

"I didn't come about my eye, sir; it's this old place on my arm."

The surgeon can do nothing but have the arm dressed and send the woman back to her fate.

The Medical Staff of the hospital contains many famous names, but there is one physician who is always known as the "Chief." He is a Baronet who prescribes for Royalty, who is always being telegraphed for by ailing Dukes and Earls, and yet in spite of all this grandeur, he is a simple-minded, frank Englishman, thoroughly interested in his profession. The Chief always enters the wards, followed by a crowd of at least thirty students, who listen eagerly to every word that falls from the great man's lips. Indeed, if there is the least heedlessness or inattention on the part of the crowd, the Chief soon discovers it, and his caustic tongue rapidly recalls all wandering wits. Only on two afternoons in the week, and those not very regularly, does the Chief visit the hospital, and his time is always occupied with the more interesting cases which the house-physician points out to him. The patient who is chosen as a subject for the great man to lecture on and teach from, believes himself to be highly honoured, and does not in the least mind the inconvenience of being carried into the hall, and perhaps "stethoscoped" by a dozen different people for about two hours. All the onus of choosing which cases are suitable for the Chief's consideration, and seeing that the diagnoses and histories are clear and correct, rests with the house-physician. Indeed, of all the busy people in that hive of hard workers, perhaps the house-physician who does his duty is generally the busiest. He is young and with but slight experience; probably for the first time, he finds himself in a highly responsible position. He has to see that his clinical clerks perform their antics, and to instruct them in the same; he has to take his turn in the receiving room, to attend to about fifty patients—men, women, and children; and to make all preparations for the visits of the various physicians who are over him. He resides in the hospital where two rooms are allotted him, and he is liable to be called up at any hour of the night. The house-physician who does not look back with regret to the freedom of his student days must be a rare exception, though the great experience to be gained in these posts, makes them much coveted by those who seek to [rise] in their profession.

It is the students who have all the fun, flavoured with just so much work as they choose to do. Young fellows, fresh from school or college and full of the unbounded energy of youth, they suddenly find themselves free from all but the slightest supervision in the heart of a great city. The first session is generally devoted to many lectures and to attendance in the museums, anatomical and dissecting theatres, and to lounging in the library of the Medical College. If the student resides with one of the physicians, he will probably be made to do a good deal of reading; but if he is in lodgings in the same street with many of his comrades, he will more probably be led into much mischief. To become immediately a person of importance, the new student should be a good football player and an enthusiastic admirer of the "sacred lamp of burlesque." Even the house-governor acknowledges the necessity for the hospital to hold its own in the football field, and once having caught a student dressing wounds in the dinner hour contrary to rules, he immediately forgave him, when it was explained that the delinquent was one of the fifteen who had to play for the Challenge Cup that afternoon.

In his second year the student is allowed to commence hospital practice among the out-patients, and in the third year he is introduced into the wards, operating theatre, and post-mortem room. His companions may possibly permit him a little peace to work now, as the time for taking his degree draws near; but still, under no circumstance must you expect a medical student to be serious.

The Nursing Staff form no mean number of inmates within the hospital walls, and their work in the healing art is only second in importance to that of the surgeons and physicians. There is first of all the Matron, tall and stately, in a handsome gown of black silk. Her duties are onerous, and, to fill her post to perfection, she must possess a marvellous memory, an agreeable manner, a strong sense of justice, and a quick eye. She has to manage about a hundred nurses, thirty Sisters, and many minor officials; she is also responsible for the state of the wards. The Matron is usually expected to give a course of lectures on nursing every year; and the whole tone of the nurses' talk, and the standard at which they aim in their work, are largely influenced by the expressed views of the head of their department.

The term "Sister" has often no religious

signification in hospital life; it merely means the head nurse on a floor, who lives in the centre of the wards which are her charge, and superintends all the work that is done there. It is the Sister who receives the physician's orders and sees that they are carried into effect; who takes the necessary splints and bandages to the operating theatre and hands them as they are wanted; who administers the medicine and weighs out the food. Some Sisters will help in the actual nursing; but, except occasionally to show how things should be done, this is a mistake, as their special work of keeping all papers and supervising all within their wards, is employment enough for one woman.

A Sister is generally on duty from eight in the morning till five in the evening. From then till seven—the dinner hour—she is at liberty to go forth in search of a little fresh air. After dinner, which is the only meal the Sisters take together, they are on duty for another two hours, till all is straight for the night. The one objection to this life is the constant confinement within the hospital: the sleeping, eating, and living always within sound of the work going on in the wards. It is an intensely interesting existence, full of varied experiences and close contact with human nature in passionate moods; but the mental strain is heavy, and the usual remuneration, about fifty pounds a year, absurdly inadequate.

The nurses sleep in a detached building, fitted up with numerous tiny bed-rooms. They have three meals: breakfast at half-past six; dinner at one; and supper at half-past nine. An allowance of tea, and bread, and butter, is doled out to them weekly, and they have to find time to take this meal as they can within the ward. A day nurse is on duty from seven in the morning till half-past nine at night, with only half an hour for her dinner and an occasional two hours' leave of absence when the work is light. Night nurses are on duty for twelve hours at a stretch—a shorter time; but then night work is monotonous, and not nearly so instructive as attendance on the doctor during the day.

A nurse commences her morning labours by sweeping and dusting the ward, making the beds, and taking the patients' temperatures. By ten o'clock everything has to be in a state of absolute cleanliness and tidiness, and the nurse, in fresh cap and apron, should be ready to wait on the house-surgeon when he arrives, and to per-

form the more professional parts of her calling.

This occupies the time till noon, when the patients' dinners are served round; after which the nurse gets her own meal. In the afternoon, visiting surgeons or physicians may be expected; the patients receive their friends; or it is out-patients' day, and the nurse has to go down and wait on them. In the evening there is the same tidying process and taking of temperatures to be gone through as in the morning, and sometimes there is a lecture or bandaging class to attend.

Of the thousand-and-one duties that fill up every spare moment of a nurse's time, the making poultices, filling ice-bags, rubbing in liniments, etc., it is impossible to give any definite conception. Only this may be said, that that state of things known as "nothing to do," which causes character to deteriorate, spoils endless tempers, and ruins many homes, is absolutely unknown in a hospital. A nurse has always plenty to do, and she is taught to do it with a cheerful countenance. The strength and calm which we see written on the faces of those noble women who have given their health and lives to the service of the sick and dying, comes from the absence of trifling. To all the virtues common to her sex, a nurse should add the strong nerve, clear head, and physical power, which are usually regarded as attributes for men alone, for she has left the region of little things and taken a prominent post in the battle against death and disease.

It is not every woman who can make a good nurse, nor does every nurse come up to the high standard which ought to be attained. The days of Sairey Gamp are past, and yet there are some queer characters still to be found in positions of trust, especially in country infirmaries.

Old Alice was a staff-nurse in a well-known hospital within the last five years, and in spite of her many failings was a general favourite. Her vast experience made the doctors appreciate her when some unusual operation was to take place, her good-humoured chaff amused the students, and the nurses under her had to acknowledge that she could make better coffee and cakes than they ever tasted elsewhere. Yet temperatures, as taken by old Alice, were strangely regular; they evidently knew what was right and proper, and always rose slightly at night and fell in the morning. Along the normal line there ever ran a series of pointed

pot-hooks, although the patient was suffering from ague or acute rheumatism. The reason was not far to seek; old Alice could not see to read the thermometer, and never even took the trouble to shake the mercury down; she merely put the instrument under each patient's arm as a matter of form. An order for fresh poultices every four hours used to meet with a strange interpretation from old Alice. The night nurse would put a poultice on at seven in the morning before going off duty; and this would, probably, be removed about eleven, for the house-physician to sound the patient. Old Alice would then put on cotton wool just till the dinners were done. Then in the afternoon there was a chance of the Chief coming round; so the poultices had better wait, and from four to five visitors would be in, then the poultice would be delayed till the teas were given; and before the night nurse came on duty, old Alice would calmly make and put on the one poultice of the day.

This style of nursing is luckily becoming more uncommon every year. The modern nurse is usually a well-educated and refined woman, who has undergone a long period of scientific training. She is well read in pharmacy and therapeutics, keeps a skeleton in her cupboard, and takes in the "Lancet." The fault to which she is most prone is to regard her patients as "cases," and to forget the essentially womanly part of her calling.

Most of our large hospitals now take lady probationers for a term of not less than three months, on payment of a guinea per week. In this way a practical knowledge of the work demanded of a nurse can be obtained, and a woman can ascertain whether she is capable of undertaking it professionally. Much of the work is obviously unsuited to young girls, who should not be permitted to attempt it, and the more mature character is necessary to stand the strain on mind and body. Those who from evanescent sentiment or from impatience of home control seek the hospital, soon have a rude awakening; the long hours and menial tasks rapidly dispel all romantic illusions; and only a woman who is actuated by the highest motives can hope to successfully achieve the labours demanded of her. Lady probationers are commonly believed to flirt with the students, to faint at operations, and to do no work; but as a fact they never get an opportunity of behaving like this, and are usually liked for their

extreme sympathy and kindness to all, and their general trustworthiness. The lady probationer is naturally shy in her new position, and is far more likely to give annoyance from her frightened reserve than from an inclination to flirt, and also more apt to overwork herself in her fresh enthusiasm than to become idle and lazy. If only those old and tried nurses who rail at lady pupils, would for a moment try to comprehend the feelings of a pure, sensitive girl when she first enters a hospital ward in cap and apron, they would be a little more merciful in their remarks, and begin to teach more gently and gradually. Constant training of probationers is trying though; and we have some sympathy with Sister Dora, who preferred doing all the work herself to being bothered to show others how to do it.

Scrubbing the floors used to be demanded of all nurses not many years ago; but now nursing is more distinctly acknowledged as an art, women are specially engaged to do much of this mere physical labour. One of these great rough women now engaged as a scrubber, was during the year 1866 a special nurse for cholera patients. Her off-hand way of talking of the epidemic and its fatal effects, increases our good opinion of educated nurses. Out of fifty patients that passed through her hands nearly a half died, and no doubt it was "summat like nursin'" as the woman declares.

Though in our view of "hospital life" we have turned lastly to the Nursing Staff, it is by no means because they are least in our estimation. The patients are here for their own advantage; the doctors seek the power of making a great reputation and at the same time a fortune; but the nurses have no hope of either fame or pecuniary reward. They have made the hospital their home; they have given their strength to the weak, their lives to the dying; and their compensation is that peace which comes from having no wants of their own, all hopes and wishes being centred in others.

FROM HER HIGH ESTATE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS. PART III.

THE Kirmesse was over. The merry-go-rounds had played their final tune; the acrobats had turned their last somersault; the stalls and booths were cleared away; and the only external trace left of the

great festivity was a litter of crumpled paper, orange peel, and broken cocoa-nut shells. Berckenstein had folded up its holiday attire, and settled down to its normal quiet and its everyday work.

With one exception. The miller was much pre-occupied by something which could not be called his everyday work. He was so much pre-occupied that he had found no time to question his son about the ball at the "Golden Eagle," or to listen to the tale which Wolff had set going, of Fritz's refusal to dance with the young Gräfin. Ever since the news of his son's success had reached him—a success which immeasurably surpassed his wildest hopes—he had gone to and fro among his corn-sacks and flour-sacks with an earnest face and knitted brow. Then, once or twice, he had put on his best clothes and had taken the train to Düsseldorf, where he had had a long interview with his lawyer; and when in the evenings he paid an occasional visit to the "Wild Huntsman," to drink a mug of beer with Mathias Sprengel, and Schultz, and Schmidt, and the rest, he was unwontedly silent. Yet the miller was in the unusual and enviable position of a man whose most elaborate air-castles prove to be substantial dwellings, and whose most audacious hopes seem to have been veritable inspirations.

"What hast thou on thy mind, friend Beumer?" asked Schultz one evening, about ten days after the Kirmesse. "Thou couldst not look more doleful if thy boy had got himself into a scrape at Berlin, like my Jacob did in Düsseldorf, instead of which, he's given you cause to look as jaunty as you please."

"Nay, nay," interposed Sprengel, while the miller silently puffed his pipe. "He doesn't look what you may call doleful. I've known him longer than you have; we were lads together, when you were a baby in arms. I know what Fritz Beumer looks like when he's got a trouble at his heart. He has something on his mind; but it's no grief to him, I'll go bail."

"You're a very wise old chap, Mathias," laughed Schultz. "But I'll bet a thaler to a groschen that you aren't in the miller's counsels, any more than I am."

"No one's in my counsels," spoke the miller sedately. "I follow my own counsel, without any help from any one; and as to what I'm thinking over, you'll all know soon enough; indeed, there isn't any reason why you shouldn't know now."

But for all that, he resumed his smoking, without vouchsafing any further information.

"Well, I'm by no means curious," returned Schultz. "I daresay it's nothing more than the price of grain or the mending of the mill-dam."

"That it never is!" exclaimed Sprengel. "You've never seen him put on his considering cap over the markets. Why, he buys and sells by instinct, and as to the mill-dam, I'm a mason, and I know that's as sound as good stone and cement can make it. Curious about the matter you may be or not, as you choose; but I'm free to confess that I should like to know what has made friend Beumer so moody and broody ever since the week before last, when the news came from Berlin about Fritz's patent and the great things he is to do with it."

"Ah!" repeated Beumer absently, "and the great things he is to do with it."

"How is the thing to be worked?" asked the host of the "Wild Huntsman," who had joined them. "Will thy son have his machines made by some firm, or will he set up a Fabrik for himself?"

"A lot you know about such matters," replied the miller contemptuously. "Why should he trust his work to other hands? It stands to reason he'll have a Fabrik of his own."

His listeners exchanged glances.

"It'll cost a pot of money then, miller, to set him going," said Schmidt.

"No doubt it will," put in Sprengel, "but Beumer's well-to-do. He'll soon have a factory built."

"It won't have to be built," said the miller. "It's built already."

"Built already!" exclaimed the landlord. "Why, we've heard nothing about it. Where did you build it?"

"Nowhere; I bought it ready built."

"Bought a factory!" (this was in chorus). "Merciful Heaven! how many thousand thalers did that cost you?"

The miller smiled a grim smile. "It cost me all I have ever saved; but it's a good investment, so I shan't complain."

"Ay, that it is," said Sprengel admiringly; "who could gainsay that? Why, Friedel will make his fortune a dozen times over. There's not a scrap of risk; at least, judging by all we read in the newspapers."

"Very true," assented the landlord. "The miller knows what he's about; he wouldn't be misled even by his own son

in money matters. He knew the thing was worth the price of a factory before he put all his savings into buying one."

"I didn't," said the miller curtly. "The building which Fritz will use as a Fabrik was as good as mine before the boy left school; and though I hoped my lad might some day do something worth talking of, I never looked to see him at the top of the tree this ten years."

"But why did you buy a factory?" persisted the landlord; "if you didn't expect the boy to make use of it. Did you buy it to sell again?"

"I didn't," replied Beumer. "I bought it because I had long set my heart on having it. I've no doubt I should have found some use for it, even if Fritz's invention hadn't come into his head at all."

"Oh, well," retorted the landlord, "if you're bent on making mysteries, make them. You always have been close over your getting and spending."

"And I've found it answer so far," said the miller grimly, as he emptied his tankard and rose to go. "You'll all know in two or three days, where Fritz is going to make his electric light machinery. You'll have something to talk about, I warrant you."

So saying, he left the group, and Sprengel followed him. The two walked silently to the end of the street, where, by the Castle gateway, they usually parted.

"There's not much comes or goes under this arch now," said Beumer, irrelevantly enough, as it appeared to his companion. The old mason shook his head.

"No," he said sadly, "times are changed since we were young, Fritz, aren't they—wofully changed?"

"They are, Mathias; and, maybe, the changes are not over yet."

"Most likely not," assented Sprengel, "once a stone starts rolling downhill it's hard to stop it."

"Mathias," continued the miller abruptly, "dost thou remember my Lieschen, and what thou and I saw one night, forty years ago, down by the river?"

"I remember," answered Sprengel; "but why dost thou ask that? I have not heard thee say Lieschen's name since that night."

"Mathias," said Beumer, laying his hand on his old friend's arm, "I've not forgotten, if I have not spoken. I've not forgotten, if Gottfried von Bercken has, how he stole my love from me, and all that came of it. There will be coming

and going enough, under that old gateway, soon; first, a great going out—the von Berckens will have to say a long goodbye to their Castle. It's mine now, my own; bought and paid for, without Gottfried von Bercken's leave asked or given; and in less than six months there shall be a tall factory chimney by the side of the tower, and there shall be busy feet backwards and forwards across the courtyard, and a noise of machinery in the big rooms. Yes, Mathias, I've kept it quiet; no one has known of my dearest scheme; and it isn't many men whose heart's desire has been fulfilled as mine has."

"Fritz!" gasped Sprengel, "what dost thou mean? Berckenstein thine, and whether the Count would or no! Surely thou art drunk or mad."

"I'm not," replied the miller. "See, Mathias, it was in this way; there were mortgages, heavy mortgages, made when the property was worth half as much again as it is now. Why shouldn't I buy up mortgages, if I had money to invest for my boy, and if I longed to feel I was von Bercken's master? Last Martinmas I got the last, and then I waited, meaning to foreclose when it should seem best to me. Ah, Mathias, it was fine to see him walking about so stately and proud, and all unknowing who was his rightful lord! I thought, perhaps, the Fräulein might find a lover, and that it would prove the truth of his affection if he heard suddenly that she would never be mistress of Berckenstein. No, Mathias, you can't say I'm cruel; think of that night by the river, and of what went after. And if, as you say, she had done none of the wrong, does not it stand written that the sin of the fathers shall be visited on the children? But there has come no lover to her; and, instead, came my lad's great doings: that was far better. It has been a lot of bother; but this very day the matter has been settled, and Berckenstein will be of some use in the world, for I shall fit it up as a factory for Fritz to make his fortune and fame by—and now you know the whole story. Good night."

"Stay, Fritz," cried Sprengel all aghast, "stay. What is to become of the Count and the Countess, and the Fräulein Magda?"

But the miller was already out of hearing, and the old mason was left alone, staring at the bold outline of the castellated walls against the opal sky, and musing over the wonderful chances and

changes that lie within the compass of one man's experience.

In less than a week after the miller had blurted out his story to Sprengel, it was known far and near that Berckenstein Castle had become his property, and that the Count was going to live at a small hunting-lodge in the neighbourhood. The villagers' sympathy was altogether with the fallen estate of their liege lord; nevertheless, the miller was too influential to be offended carelessly, and whatever criticisms were passed on the way he had planned and consummated his purchase, were passed in the discreetest of whispers. Such criticisms might have been louder, and he would not have heeded or even heard them; his mind was absorbed with one idea—that of the alterations necessary for converting the Castle to its new use. He was all impatience for the Count and his family to leave the building free for the workmen to go into it; and, if Fritz had not refused steadily to allow such an intrusion, he would have had it inspected, measured, and planned, as soon as the ink was dry on the deed by which it became his property.

To his son the miller was by no means so explicit in his account of the purchase of Berckenstein as he had been to his old friend Sprengel. Fritz heard, and with much surprise, that the Castle had passed, in the course of certain transactions connected with the advance of a large sum of money some years ago, into his father's hands; and that, since the Count refused to remain there as a tenant, the most natural arrangement was that the vast, solid building should be utilised as the factory which must be established somewhere for the making of his newly-patented machinery. It seemed to Fritz somewhat cruelly ironical that he should be the final cause of the banishment of the von Berckens; and, at times, he found himself imagining Magda's possible feelings towards himself, when her old home should be revolutionised. But his thoughts were too fully engrossed with other and more practical matters, for him to dwell long in the region of mere sentimental conjecture. He was too keen and energetic of character to sigh and languish over a love-dream. There was so much to do; so much to overcome; so much to strive after; life was so infinitely interesting and manifold; that he needed no philosophy to keep his heart from brood-

ing over his quixotic passion. He did not endeavour not to worship Magda from afar; but he wasted no valuable time in empty reverie. That Sunday of the Kirmesse had been a holiday. The holiday was over now, and the working days were too precious, too irrevocable, to be dedicated to anything but the earnest, vigorous purpose of his life.

Whatever the Count's feeling were when he learnt how his long-standing difficulties were to be settled, he spoke of them to no one.

It was several days before he announced the matter to his wife and daughter, with an indifference which was so well assumed that to Magda it appeared genuine:

"I wish it to be clearly understood," he said in conclusion, "that though this has come, to a certain extent, suddenly, it is by no means a blow to me. We—the von Berckens of Berckenstein—have had our day; and if the Castle is to change hands it is just as well it should become a noisy, smoky manufactory as anything else."

The Countess was silent. She had borne so many things in her life that she had learnt the wisdom of silence; but the tears coursed down her cheek in furrows worn there by much weeping. Magda had not learnt any such patient silence as yet. Perhaps she never learnt it later either; she would be better without it.

"Father," she cried hotly, "how can you speak so of leaving Berckenstein? I did not know until this moment that any power on earth could drive us away from here. Sold! Do you say? How can that be? And surely no one would dare to desecrate it by—"

"My child," interrupted the Count, "you are speaking, as women do speak, without understanding. Your indignation is quite misplaced. If you are wise, you will keep to yourself all the pain you may feel. For myself, I have very little regret; and it would be absurd to nurse resentment towards Beumer, who appears to be a clever young man, and who will make his way in life, despite our maledictions. Ah, by the way, I must not forget to mention that I have had a most respectful note from him, stating that, as he does not intend to make use of the gardens himself, he shall be glad if we will consider them still at our disposal to walk about in. It is very considerate of him, I must say—very considerate." The Count spoke with a half-suppressed sneer, which belied his

words. "Of course," he continued, "after the chimney which he means to build begins to smoke, we shall not be able to avail ourselves of his condescension when the wind is in an unfavourable quarter, and it would not surprise me if the wind were to remain stationary in that unfavourable quarter. I hope, Magda, that you understand me."

But Magda was already out of hearing. She was hurrying to her far-off favourite terrace, to be alone with her sudden desperate trouble. There was more bitterness at her heart than she believed she could bear. A week ago, two days ago, that very morning, if she had been asked whether or not she was very deeply attached to Berckenstein she would have answered, that her life there was, and always had been, colourless and lonely, and that she could not fancy herself feeling home-sickness for a place where her share of happiness had been so small. But this change of position put the question in a totally different light; before she could answer it she had to realise that Berckenstein had passed out of the hands of the von Berckens for ever.

The afternoon sunlight was streaming along the valley, and the wooded bends were full of peaceful haze; from just below her came the busy clatter of the mill and the hum of the water, as they had come up to her year after year as long as she could remember. A great mist of tears rose up between her and the many-coloured landscape; she felt the hot drops following one another down her cheeks, and splashing on her hands which lay listlessly clasped on the stone parapet. Oh, it was a terrible thing to weep like this, and to be all alone in the world! For Magda called herself alone, because she had shut her heart up in solitude to dream the wildest and sweetest dream—so it seemed to her—that ever a nobly-born maiden had suffered to haunt her. It was all very sad and cruel, she thought bitterly; it would be better to be dead and buried than to face the long, hateful future that stretched away in an indefinite hopelessness. The sound of footsteps and voices roused her a little. They were men's voices; she did not know who it could be; she shrank into the old summer-house to be out of sight; from there she heard, though she at first scarcely heeded, what was being said among the trees close beside her.

"And this is the end of the shrubberies. Well, they're fine gardens anyhow, though

they are in such a state of neglect. It would take a lot of money to put them in anything like order. Nevertheless, Beumer, I should feel greatly inclined to make the outlay, and then to build an inn, or you might rent a house adjacent, or even enlarge the gardener's cottage, and then you could admit the public at so much a head. You would find it an excellent speculation."

"No doubt I should, Herr Lenz," replied the miller. "The idea has occurred to me more than once, but at present I do not see my way to the expenditure. This business of my son's will be a costly one. We must wait awhile before we can lay out what would be necessary. It is merely a question of time. Let me see, this elm must come down. You've got the chalk, haven't you? Mark that one too; and the red pine.

"So," returned the other. "Well, as I was saying, the shrubs would want renewing, and, where these terraced paths have broken away you would have to build them up a bit. The big trees are grand timber; but don't be in a hurry to cut too much down. It won't do to disfigure the place."

Magda had listened so far indifferently. It seemed to her as if she were buried, and that irreverent footsteps were trampling on her grave. Suddenly her attention was arrested by the sound of her father's voice. It was most unusual for him to be wandering in the shrubberies; he must be like herself, bidding his old home farewell; however, his voice sounded anything but tender as he spoke.

"Are you aware," he was saying in an imperious tone, "that you are trespassing on private property?"

"Whose private property?" retorted the miller arrogantly.

"Oh," replied the Count with sneering deference, "I perceive I am addressing Herr Beumer, the miller, who has lately become the owner of Berckenstein."

"You are," said the miller; "and you may as well understand for the future that it is the miller Beumer, and not Gottfried von Bercken, who has the right of ordering intruders out of these grounds."

The Count made a bow, which Magda could not see, though she could well imagine the expression of her father's face as he replied:

"My intrusion on your inspection of your new property was purely accidental. Your lawyer gave me to understand that you would assume your rights not sooner

than the end of the present month. Hence my misapprehension. So far from expecting to meet with you here this afternoon I fancied I had caught sight of some vagabonds lurking among the trees with no good intentions."

"That's a lie," cried Beumer savagely, stung by the studied impertinence of the Count's speech. "You knew as well as possible who it was; and even if we had been what you say you took us for, who are you that you should bid us begone?"

"That is quite enough; more than enough on so trivial a matter," returned the Count, ignoring the angry insolence of Beumer's words; "I bid you good-day."

"No," cried the other, "you do no such thing. It is not enough. Many a time I have longed to tell you to your face the plain truth about this business; and many a time I've denied myself the chance because I was too soft-hearted. And so it comes that you scarcely know as yet why you are being driven away from Berckenstein; why a low-born fellow like me should covet such a great place, and plot and plan till he has got it. You've put the past out of your mind, while I——"

"Hold your lying tongue, you scoundrel," interrupted the Count, "or, by Heavens, you shall repent of your ill-timed insolence."

But the miller was too much roused to be silenced.

"Scoundrel!" he shouted. "Scoundrel, indeed! Was I ever scoundrel enough to lead a poor girl to her ruin—scoundrel enough to desert her in her hour of need. Do you know, von Bercken, why no son has been born to you in your fine Castle to bear your name? It was because of the curse of that desolate, dying girl. Am I lying? Why have you turned pale to the lips if I am lying? You thought that the story of my poor little cousin was over and done with, and now you know better. It isn't all men that forget the past. I don't, for one. Come along, Herr Lenz, your horse must be ready."

And Magda heard their retreating footsteps along the shrubbery.

She did not move. This glimpse of a cruel, sad past, this horrible, by-gone wrong, which had laid up such a retribution of humiliation for her to share, innocent as she was, and from which the veil had been torn so abruptly, paralysed her very heart. Long afterwards she remembered with an almost ridiculous accuracy every outline of the foliage above her, as she looked up,

dazed and crushed, to the cloudless sky beyond. Then there came from the terrace the sound of a curious, half-stifed sobbing, a few uncertain steps, and a heavy fall; then a terrible moan, followed by a still more terrible silence.

Sick with fear she sprang to her feet and came from her hiding-place. There on the ground, with wide-open, senseless eyes, pale, and apparently lifeless, lay her father, as if he had sunk helplessly under the bitter words which had been hurled at him.

She knelt down beside him. "Father, father," she cried, "what is it? Speak to me. For Heaven's sake, speak." But such an appeal was, as she well knew it would be, all in vain. Then she laid her hand on his heart; in her agitation she could not perceive whether it was beating or not. His face was cold and damp, so were his hands. A terror seized her that he was dead or dying. She tried to raise him in her arms, it was utterly beyond her strength.

What could she do? she thought wildly. It was so far to go for help, unless she went to the mill, which was very near; but then how could she go there? If she could only call till some one heard and came to her. She stood up and shouted again and again, but there was no answer; no sound except from the mill, and the precious moments were stealing on; and what if this loss of time in doing something to relieve her father were fatal. She was scarcely conscious of having resolved to leave him, when she was on her way down the hill so swiftly that she felt as if she were dreaming, and being borne along involuntarily; so swiftly that it seemed as if she were still hesitating and debating with herself, when she stood breathless under the trellis that formed a porch to the miller's house.

The miller's wife was sitting in the shade, busily shredding beans for supper, and talking to her tall, stalwart son, who stood leaning somewhat lazily against the doorway, giving one half of his attention to his mother's chatter, and the other half to his own reflections. Suddenly he straightened himself and stepped forward, uttered an involuntary exclamation, as Magda, pale and quivering with excitement, came between him and the evening glow. For a moment he waited for her to speak; but her panting throat and dry lips could not form any sound; she could only look into his face with pleading eyes.

In answer to her mute appeal, with an impulse he did not try to resist, he took her hand in both his, and said :

"Wait a while, you have no breath to speak. I am ready to help you, whatever it is you want."

"Why, it is the noble Fräulein!" cried Frau Beumer in astonishment. "My poor Fräulein, you look beside yourself. You have come to upbraid us with what my husband has done. In truth, neither I nor the lad knew, any more than yourself, what was——"

"It is my father," gasped Magda. "Oh, come with me as quickly as possible—he is ill—it was quicker to come down here—he is on the terrace. Nothing else matters just now, if you will only help me."

"My poor Fräulein," exclaimed the good woman once again. "How shocking! And were you alone with him? And what is his illness like? Would some brandy be of any use? Go with her, Fritz. Ah, the good lad is already gone, and the Fräulein has gone, too, though she looked as if her poor limbs would hardly bear her. I will get some brandy, and carry it to them."

Whereupon, she carefully untied and laid aside her apronful of beans, and went into the house with as much haste as she could muster; but the brandy was far to seek, and by the time she had slowly mounted the slope the terrace was empty.

Meanwhile Fritz, and Magda with his help, had silently climbed the hill, and stood on the terrace, where the Count lay motionless.

"See," said Magda, the agony of the scene breaking on her afresh, "it has killed him. He tried to look as if he did not care—but he did care. Oh, it is horrible to see him lie so! Can he be really dead?"

Fritz knelt down beside him, a great pity in his face, loosened his neckcloth, and looked into the eyes which still remained open.

"No, Fräulein," he said; "he is not dead, but I fear he is very ill."

"Do you think," asked Magda, "that you could lift him very gently, if I help you, and lay him a little more comfortably? And then, if you would watch beside him, I would go to the Castle to fetch some one."

"I will carry him to the Castle at once," replied Fritz, "if you will let me. You said just now that you would think of nothing else but of your father. You must forget what has troubled him, and let me serve you as if I were ——"

Fritz did not finish the sentence; his eye

met hers for a moment, and then he raised the Count in his arms.

The change of position seemed to affect him, for he moaned, and drew a short, gasping breath :

"Wait a moment," said Magda anxiously. "If it hurts him to be moved, let us wait awhile."

Fritz waited obediently, resting the unconscious head against his arm as tenderly as a woman could have done, while Magda stood wistfully watching.

Slowly there came back to the fixed eyes a look of consciousness, which fell first on the face nearest, the face of Friedrich Beumer.

"Ah, Fräulein," said Fritz softly, "he is already better. Speak to him. My face will puzzle him. He will not know who I am."

"I do, I do," stammered the Count. "I know you; you are Beumer, the miller. Why are you here again? Leave me alone. We cannot mend those old matters now."

"Father," said Magda, bending over him, "this is not the miller. It is his son. You have been ill, and he has come to help you. Will you let him carry you home?"

"Whose son, do you say?" asked the Count, looking round as if he could not remember where he was. "Beumer has no son. Beumer was to have been married; but he did not marry—the girl ran away—she gave him up."

Then, with a sudden effort, he rose to his feet, and, supporting himself against the parapet, looked wildly round.

"And you say Berckenstein is sold; I tell you it is not. It is mine, and I will die here as my fathers have died here. I gave no permission for it to be sold, I tell you. That must be a mistake. And now," he continued feebly, raising his hand to his head, "give me your arm, Magda. I feel faint, I seem to have been asleep, and I dream——"

As he spoke he staggered a few steps, pushing aside Fritz's outstretched arm, and fell, his head striking sharply against the parapet. Magda sprang forward with a cry; but Fritz, putting her aside, took the inanimate figure once more in his strong arms and bore him as quickly as possible to the Castle.

Before sunset that evening, the news had gone forth that the last Count von Bercken von Berckenstein had died suddenly, had died of a grief which had been too great for his proud heart to bear.

There was a stately funeral in the little cemetery beyond the village, and after that, the Countess and Magda went away to the hunting-lodge which was built on a spur of the hills far up the valley, and from which they could see in the distance the outline of the Castle rock, and the square tower, and the bend of the river below it, marked by a golden line when the sun was setting. They could not, however, distinguish from so far the many changes which were being swiftly wrought in and about the stately old building. The massive tower screened from them the tall chimney, which rose beside it in glaring red-brick contrast to the old stones.

The villagers, who could see, took a daily, increasing interest in the alterations; they said little, but they felt in their hearts as they watched the growth of the Castle into a busy factory, that perhaps better and more prosperous times were in store for them. The Count's death had been very tragic; but why should the miller be held accountable for an event, which was, after all, nothing less than a visitation of God? It was well known also, that the Countess held the Beumers blameless; otherwise, she could not have allowed the son to do so much for her at the time when all the trouble fell upon her. She seemed, indeed, to have forgotten, or forgiven, the miller's connection with that trouble; and whenever Fritz could make time to go to the Jagdschloss, he was a welcome visitor. While, as to the Fräulein Magda—

But here the villagers shook their heads and came to a standstill, for they were but simple rustics in those days, and there were still some matters which lay, as they had to confess, beyond the limited range of their comprehension.

In the course of a few years, however, the great Beumer Fabrik carried them so far along the stream of progress, that they could, without the use of strong interjections, speak of Doctor Friedrich Beumer's happy marriage with the last of the von Berckens.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcoates," etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE dinner which celebrated this family reunion was not a very brilliant affair. Mr. Behrens could at no time be said to contribute much to general conversation;

though it was supposed by Miss Walton, at least, that he made up for his silence in public by the strength and urgency of his arguments in private. Even she, however, could not have accused him of any share in the new turn events had taken. Probably, had she known of it, she would have rejoiced in John Temple's recognised claim to a place in the family circle, as one barrier the more between Tilly and the insinuating German. She would have liked to picket Tilly round with consins against this wily enemy.

Behrens, however, displayed no burning ill-will to John; he did not stint him of salt, or fail to pass him the decanter; he listened to John's few remarks with attention, turning his clear deep-set eyes on him with a consideration that was almost embarrassing in its silent politeness.

As for John, he ought that night to have been the happiest young fellow in London. Had he not been honoured by taking Tilly down to dinner? And was there ever before, in history or fiction, a new-found cousin so beautiful, so gracious, so frank, and charming? He had been recognised, accepted, received into the family; he, who a few hours earlier had only faintly dared to hope that he might someday see Tilly from afar. Here was he seated at her side, sharing her smile, hearing "cousin" fall from the prettiest lips in the world.

Uncle Bob, too, took pains to let him understand that his claim was acknowledged. Already he granted him some of the privileges of relationship: sent him on errands, asked him to carve; but alas! the pains were too manifest. There was with it all a hint of something forced and unspontaneous; and John, for the life of him, could not help feeling that he was regarded as playing the part of the prodigal, new home from the far country. He was Jessie's son, but he was John Temple's son too, and on his broad shoulders he had to bear his father's sins.

The cause of Mr. Burton's silence and constraint was not difficult to divine. He was roughly cast back on the past, which for years he had succeeded in forgetting, and he was deprived of the one topic on which he was perfectly at home, on which he could always be eloquent.

His vanity was of a thoroughly impersonal order: it was not of himself that he was vain, but of the riches that were his. He used to stand, as it were, before his wealth and contemplate it from all sides. He walked round it and looked at it from every possible angle; he held it up to the

public gaze, he the showman and guide; and he was as proud of it and as fond of hearing it quoted as an author of a first book, or as, according to popular belief, a baronet or knight (especially a knight) loves to hear the "Sir" before his name. Deprive him, then, of this congenial occupation, force his thoughts unwillingly back into a channel over which they have long ceased to flow spontaneously, and how can you expect an old gentleman of limited imagination to be lively?

The truth is, family gatherings are often very dull affairs, though it is not considered good taste to say so. The mere link of common ancestors, the possession of common blood, does not make a relation of necessity a congenial friend, and an uncle and nephew who had never met nor cared to meet, who had no traditions or associations in common, were not likely to pump up a great deal of enthusiasm in their first encounter.

On the whole, Mr. Burton felt drawn rather to Fred, who was no relation. Fred could talk, at least, and didn't sit staring as if he was moonstruck. He was a good-looking chap—better-looking than the other, and he was, moreover, supposed to move in very high society; and the doctor, his father, had done nothing to make anybody wish he was dead. These were all points in Fred's favour, and when he cleverly dissected a duck that John had only succeeded in mangling, he felt, himself, that he had scored.

Mr. Burton considered that every young fellow ought to be able to carve. He resented the fashion prevailing in the hotel of dining "à la Russe," as an impertinent attempt to thrust unknown and unproved dishes on the eater.

"I like to see my meat before me," he said. "Give me a good joint of beef where I can cut and come again, and none of your rubbishy kickshaws. What's the good of giving me a paper of the victuals, when I can't make head or tail of a single word of it? I know a cut of cod or a tidy bit of salmon when I see it, and as for broth, you'll not make them" (in Lilliesmuir it is the fashion to speak of broth and porridge in the plural) "any better by giving them a French name."

And so amid the steam of gravy and the clatter of plates, knives and forks, the solid dinner went on, while Tilly vainly tried to lighten its heaviness by attempts at talk with John.

"Do you two live together?" she asked,

giving Fred, who was talking to her uncle, a sidelong glance.

John laughed in his quiet way.

"Fred wouldn't feel flattered by the supposition," he said. "He is a gentleman of fashion, a man about town. He lives in chambers: that is to say, he lives there when he isn't somewhere else—at his club, or dining with friends, or spending days at their country homes."

"Doesn't he do anything—any work, I mean?"

"Oh yes, he is in a Government office. His department includes among other things boots and shoes, and washing machines, I believe."

"What has Government to do with shoes and washing?" Tilly asked with natural surprise, and another side look at Fred, who wore a crimson tie, and looked undeniably picturesque, and extremely unlike leather or soap.

"It grants patents for new appliances and inventions, that is all. To be in the Patent Office is considered a most honourable career; it ranks with the Post Office and Somerset House."

Tilly knew nothing about Somerset House, and she associated the Post Office with the general shop at Lilliesmuir, where cheese and candles, and also buttons and tape, could be purchased; but she accepted the statement without understanding it.

"And you?" she questioned; "you are in a bank?"

"Yes, and when you've said that you've said everything. It is impossible to be enthusiastic over my occupation."

"Tell me about your home."

"There is so little of it; it is so small in every way, and just like thousands of others, all over London. It will seem to you like a doll's house if ever you go to see it."

"I mean to go," she assured him. "I mean to go and see my cousin Jessie very soon. Fulham, you say? I dare say somebody will tell me how to go. Everybody seems to know the way to every place in this big London."

"Mayn't I call for you and show you the way?" he asked a little eagerly. "I could come on a Saturday, or a Sunday, if either day would suit you."

"On Sunday we go to the church in the morning. We have found a real Presbyterian church, where they sing the paraphrases just as they do at home; and in the afternoon my uncle—our uncle—likes me to sit with him while he smokes, or to

walk with him ; but on Saturday you shall come and show me the way. It will be like that first time when you were our guide, and we never dreamed that you were our nearest relation as well."

"When I never dreamed that all this happiness was in store for me. I shall always venerate that shop."

"I think we must have tea there again—a celebration tea—and pie. Uncle said that pie was good, and I really think he qualified himself to be a judge of it."

It will be seen that Tilly had already established quite easy relations with her cousin ; but with her cousin's cousin it was another affair. To Fred she hardly spoke at all. She devoted herself to John, and all the remarks she could spare were given to Mr. Behrens, who sat at her other side. Had Fred offended her beyond reparation by the mention of Mrs. Popham ? He was basely ready on the spot to throw over this harmless little lady if, by disowning her, he could retain Tilly's favour.

For all his astuteness, it had never occurred to Fred that the uncle and niece might not be quite willing—quite charmed, indeed—to be taken up by Mrs. Popham whenever her fickle fancy veered round to them. He had thought of them as a pair of guileless rustics, innocent of susceptibility for taking offence ; he had not, indeed, considered Mrs. Popham's crime very black.

In London, you may be at home or not at home to your friends as the mood moves you, and everybody understands ; but from the moment Tilly—Tilly a rustic, indeed !—had said with the air of a Queen, and the tone of an offended Goddess, "we don't know Mrs. Popham," Fred felt that her trespass was not to be forgiven.

He was emboldened to think, however, that his own share of guilt might be condoned by the smile she gave him when he sprang to open the door for her after dinner. This smile lent him courage to go straight to her side, when the two young men, leaving the others to smoke, rejoined her in her own sitting-room, and to cut John, who was veering that way also, out ruthlessly.

He managed by the position of his chair to give their corner an air of seclusion and privacy not to be intruded on, and John had to content himself with the company of the ornamental poets laid at regular intervals round a distant table.

"Will you—can you forgive me ?" asked Fred, some happy instinct making him go straight to the point.

"There is nothing to forgive you," said Tilly, with no pretence of not understanding him. "But I wanted to say to you—and I'm glad to say it while we are alone—that you must not speak of Mrs. Popham before my uncle. He does not like her. He is offended with her, and as she is a friend of yours, he might say things about her that you would not care to hear."

"But she is most impatient to meet him. She is planning all sorts of entertainments in his honour. She has the highest respect for him."

"Then she took an odd way of showing it," Tilly laughed. "I will tell you how it was."

"Yes, please do," said Fred, drawing his chair a very little nearer.

"Well, it was in Lilliesmuir we first knew Mrs. Popham. She came—I don't really know why she came."

"Nobody ever knows why Mrs. Popham does anything, even Mrs. Popham herself," explained Fred, gravely.

"She came and she stayed—from whatever reason. She lived with my cousin at the Manse, for a month or two." This was all Tilly had to say of the hospitality shown to the London lady during a long season. "And that, perhaps, was the reason why she grew to take an interest in my uncle who was coming home, you know, for good, and of whom we spoke every day ; and in me, because as there was no one else, she had me a great deal with her."

"No doubt," said Fred, suppressing a smile.

"When it was arranged that we were to go to London, Uncle Bob and I, Mrs. Popham said her home was to be our home ; we were to go direct there when we arrived. When people say a thing like that in Lilliesmuir, they mean it. They think, perhaps, a little before they make such an offer, but when they make it they stick to it. When Cousin Spencer invited Mrs. Popham to the Manse he did not tell 'Lisbeth to say he would not receive her, but if she would leave her address he would write. If he had," she went on, a smile dimpling her serious lips, "I believe the Session would have held a meeting to rebuke him. Perhaps in London it is different ; perhaps people are not expected to mean all they say here ; but you can't ask Uncle Bob—who goes by Lilliesmuir rules—to believe that. And so," she ended, "he is very angry with Mrs. Popham—so angry, that we are not to know her any more."

"I want you just to listen to one thing," said Fred eagerly.

While she talked he had been rapidly summing up the advantages of Mrs. Popham's as a meeting-place, and he determined that, if possible, she should be forgiven. "I want to make you understand, if I can, that it was my fault that you got so shameful a reception."

"Your fault? But you did not know us. You could not know that we were coming. Why, uncle would not let me write. He said what was the use when we were expected at any time?"

"I didn't know. If I had known, things would have been very different," he said significantly. "But I happened to have an appointment with Mrs. Popham that evening—some ridiculous, flimsy, absurd bit of business that could have been discussed any other day of the year quite as well; but with an exaggerated sense of its importance she held that she was bound to keep that hour free."

"Then I don't see how the fault was yours."

"It was my great misfortune. Do you think, seeing that I was the culprit, intentionally or not, that your uncle would be induced to forgive Mrs. Popham?"

"I don't know," she hesitated.

"If you were to persuade him?"

"He is not so very easy to persuade. And do you think it matters so very much? We have got another home," she smiled.

"It matters to Mrs. Popham. She will be very much pained and distressed."

"That makes it different, though I find it hard to believe. If you are quite sure of that, I might try."

"I am quite sure of it. She is fretting now. She has commissioned me to search all London for you. She will be overjoyed, if I may tell her you are found."

"I will think of it; I will let you know. Hush!" she held up a warning finger as she rose, "here is my uncle; not a word before him."

Fred had gained all he desired for the moment. He was in high spirits; the charm of shared confidences with this beautiful girl, had set his pulses beating and his brain whirling. And he had succeeded in isolating Tilly—in securing her sole ear; while John—John, who was but a little while ago the hero of the hour—was left to solitude and the poets.

It did not even ruffle his complacency when, on the good-byes being said, Uncle Bob gruffly invited John to remain for a

pipe and a tumbler—because John did not accept the offered hospitality.

A "tumbler," in Lilliesmuir parlance, is a mixture of whisky, sugar, and hot water, commonly called toddy, and John was quite Scotch enough in his sympathies to appreciate this beverage; but, unfortunately, the invitation, unlike the drink, had neither spirit nor warmth in it, and John's pride bade him refuse it.

"You want to get home to Jessie, don't you?" said Fred, virtuously ready to remind John of his duty. "She will be in a nice state of mind—think you garrotted, or drowned, or something."

"Well, well," said Uncle Bob, "come and see us now and then, my lad, and we'll get used to one another in time. Come both of you, and Nephew John"—he drew him aside—"we'll begin from to-day, if you please; we'll bury the past; it will be best for you and best for me. Come in and out, and take us as you find us."

Tilly, who had no past to bury, was all bright eagerness for the future.

"Yes, come often," she said; "now that I have a cousin at last, I mean to make up for lost time."

But while she spoke to John she stole a glance at Fred.

"You will remember?" he said in a low voice, as, for the first time, he took her hand.

"I will remember," she promised; and with that he hooked his arm in John's and ran him lightly downstairs. But when they got to the street, John withdrew his arm, and with some very unchristian and very un-John-like expressions, he explained that he preferred to find his way to Fulham alone.

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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dams Durdan," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

A CLERICAL DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.

ADRIAN LYLE could find no clue to Gretchen's hiding-place, nor any trace of where she had gone on leaving the cottage. She had not been seen in the village, nor at the little station; neither did any one appear to have met her on the roads about.

The growing fear in his mind gradually usurped all other thoughts, and he at last applied to the local police; they, in turn, applied to the higher authorities of the neighbouring town, with the result that Gretchen's description was telegraphed from place to place, and notable police officials made themselves extremely busy over researches that always ended in nothing.

Adrian Lyle had spent two days in these endeavours. The third would be a Sunday, and he knew that he must be at his post. He took the last train back to Medehurst, which he reached about five o'clock in the morning, pale, unwashed, unshaven, with dull, blank eyes, and haggard face—the face of a man stricken by a great calamity.

Wearied out by the long strain, he threw himself on his bed, and slept from pure exhaustion. It was ten o'clock when he awoke, and the sun was streaming into his room, and bringing with its mocking light the hard, inevitable memory of the sorrow which he had undergone; of anxiety and

suspense to be taken up; of duties to be fulfilled, and that right speedily; for in one hour he must be in his place in church.

The services of cold water and hot tea in some degree braced his physical energies, and gave him strength and courage for what he felt would be an ordeal in more ways than one.

The bells were sounding as he took his way through the churchyard and entered the vestry, but they seemed to be ringing in a dull, far-off way; and with sheer mechanical instinct he adjusted his surplice.

While he was thus engaged, the Rector entered. His brow was clouded; dissatisfaction and annoyance manifested themselves in every line of his angust visage. He deigned not to notice his curate's outstretched hand, but only honoured him with a cold, curt nod.

"Mr. Lyle," he said, "I really must express displeasure—very great displeasure—at your late eccentric conduct. I cannot allow these constant and mysterious absences; and I've heard—I've——"

"Yes?" said Adrian Lyle quietly, as he paused.

"I have heard," resumed the Rector, in his usual pompous fashion, "that these absences are—ahem—not unconnected with a lady. Is that true?"

"Quite true," answered the young man, looking steadily back at his inquisitor.

"Quite true?" echoed Mr. Bray in astonishment. "But this must be explained. I cannot allow the suspicion of any scandal to attach itself to my church, or to anyone connected with it."

"I was not aware," said Adrian Lyle, "that there was any question of scandal. Pray what have I done?"

"Can you assure me that this—this person is what she represents herself?"

Is she really married? My informant says—not."

"I do not see why I should insist upon seeing a marriage certificate before visiting a lady who is in great mental affliction, and is utterly friendless and alone," answered Adrian Lyle, with darkening brow. In his heart he thought: "So my enemy has been here also."

"Tut, tut," said Mr. Bray, "you are merely shirking the question. Of course, I know that you are comparatively a young man, but I thought you too upright and honourable to dally with—ah—temptation. Your constant absences, your changed looks, your indifference to your duties, all seem to me most reprehensible."

"My absences," said Adrian Lyle, "I have explained; duty and friendship exacted them. My looks are surely my own affair, and you cannot ask me to account to you for them. As for my duties, I scarcely think that you can say I have neglected anything but a little extra work which was voluntarily undertaken, and which I am not bound to perform unless I see fit."

"We are told," said Mr. Bray, "to abstain from even appearance of evil. Now you must promise me to give up these visits, and then we will say no more about it. There can be no great sacrifice in doing so, and——"

"I beg your pardon," said Adrian Lyle coldly. "With all due deference to you, I must say that I own no obedience on such a purely personal matter. Neither is this the time or place to enter upon such a discussion."

"As to that," interposed the Rector angrily, "it is my affair. You appear to forget that you are accountable to me—most certainly accountable in a matter that—that——"

"Has thrown a little extra duty in your way?" inquired Adrian Lyle.

"Sir, your levity is unbecoming—most unbecoming. I have been most grossly deceived in you."

"I am sorry," said Adrian Lyle, growing very pale, "you have said that. But, if my conduct is not satisfactory, you have your redress."

"And I shall take it," said Mr. Bray wrathfully. "I shall report you to the Bishop. You are not in favour with him, and——"

"And you are," said Adrian Lyle quietly. "Excuse me for reminding you that the organ has ceased. Had we not better finish our conversation after service?"

A moment later he was following his superior in office, and the two white-robed figures took their accustomed places, as though no angry thought or word had ever disturbed their composure.

It was, strange to say, not until he advanced to read the first lesson that the memory of Alexis Kenyon flashed swiftly to the mind of Adrian Lyle. As it did so, he involuntarily raised his eyes and looked straight at the Abbey pew.

She was there. As the beautiful face looked back to his own, a sudden flush rose to his pale cheek as the sight of it brought back their last meeting and all that had occurred since. The flush, the sudden tremor in the deep rich voice, were not lost on Alexis. Her heart gave a swift throb. She told herself that it was triumph; but something strangely like pain mingled with that triumph, and, for a moment, the words she heard had no meaning, and she only found herself saying:

"To think it should have been so easy after all."

That changed face bore only the interpretation of her own vanity; she could not read it by any other light. She had vowed that he should care as others had cared, and for as little purpose. True, he had never spoken the words that would have sealed her triumph; had never given her the satisfaction of rejecting him; but, all the same, the shock and horror he had so plainly shown on hearing of her engagement said quite as plainly what she had wanted him to say. A little gleam of warmth came into her eyes, as that look bridged the space between them.

She found herself wishing vaguely that her father had not made that stupid blunder; that Neale's letter had not arrived at a moment so inopportune. Things had been going on so pleasantly. Those long interviews; those eager discussions, wherein his zeal had held combat with her scepticism, had been quite charming in their way. And now there was an end. Of course there would be an end. Men were so stupid. They always stopped short at the first stumbling-block.

She leant back amongst the cushions of her pew; her eyes were half closed; a little dreamy smile was on her mouth. She listened to his voice: its deep, bell-like notes, its sonorous rhythm, how pleasant they were! She had never heard one like it—never. Somehow she told herself that she never would. It had the same individuality

about it as had Adrian himself, and she had never found anyone like him in all her wide experience of human nature.

Yet, whatever satisfaction the service held for her that morning was doomed to be cut short by news that reached her during the day.

The Rector had dismissed Adrian Lyle with startling abruptness, and he was leaving Medehurst at once.

Alexis heard this with ill-concealed disgust. Never till that moment had she realised what an important part Adrian Lyle had played in her life of late; how great a blank his absence would make.

It seemed to her impossible that he should go so long as she desired him to remain. The possibility of his doing so chagrined and irritated her all the more, in that she was powerless to control his actions any longer.

She was too proud to send for him, and he seemed equally too proud to come unbidden. But she had expected his return; expected some question or remonstrance as to that suddenly announced engagement; and the fact that none came, seemed to her almost an affront.

She had desired more than she had gained. She had wished to behold the full and complete surrender of this calm and well-balanced nature; to feel that her influence had superseded its moral force, and held him, his interests and pursuits, at her mercy.

He had left her so abruptly that she had almost looked forward to his return, had pictured her very greeting and his reply; and now all her illusions were abruptly dispelled, and he had formed a plan of action which she had never expected, and could still less oppose.

The following morning, a hundred vague rumours were afloat in the parish. "Adrian Lyle had quarrelled with the Rector." "The Rector had dismissed Adrian Lyle." "Something very much to the younger man's discredit had been discovered." "There had been hot words between them, and the result was conclusive;" and so on. Adrian Lyle was a general favourite, and his projected departure a great grief to many. But he himself offered no explanation, beyond stating the bare fact; and some thought that he seemed relieved at the idea, and some that he was regretful; but all soon joined in one conclusion, and that was, that the Rector was extremely indignant about it, and spoke in no measured terms of his subordinate's obstinacy and defiance towards himself.

Towards the evening of that Monday, whilst Alexis Kenyon was sitting in her own boudoir, in one of her most petulant and discontented moods, her maid came to the door and informed her that Bari was below and wished to speak to her.

Surprised at the information, and feeling certain that the man must have a special object for so unusual a request, Alexis bade the woman bring him to her room.

When the door opened and the dark smooth face of the Italian looked back at her own, she simply motioned him to advance.

"You have something to say to me?" she questioned with the old haughtiness.

"Yes," said the man gravely.

"Well?" she demanded. "I am waiting to hear it—though at a loss to imagine why you have come to me instead of to my father."

"I have come to you, Mademoiselle," he said, "because my news concerns you. You know that I was Mr. Kenyon's confidential servant when his sight was in so critical a condition."

"I am aware of that," she said. "Is it necessary to pay a formal visit to me to recall it?"

"During that period," the man continued suavely, "I became aware of a certain passage in Mr. Kenyon's life——"

"I have no wish," interposed the girl proudly, "to be made acquainted with any of Mr. Kenyon's secrets. If you have only come here with the intention of betraying one, I must request you to withdraw."

"Pardon, Mademoiselle—it will soon be a secret no longer, and I think it only due to you that you should hear the truth of the matter from its right source, ere rumour brings it you with a different interpretation."

Alexis leant back in her chair with an air of complete indifference as to rumour, or what it might choose to convey. She made no other answer, and Bari proceeded.

"At Vienna, in the early part of last spring, Mr. Kenyon became acquainted with a young German girl who lived in the next house. She was very young and very ignorant, and about her birth and history was a certain amount of mystery which no one had succeeded in penetrating. She was left very much to herself; time hung heavily on Mr. Kenyon's hands; and—well, Mademoiselle may suppose there was the usual result. Nothing serious would have come of it—nothing but a few walks

in the woods, a few talks and meetings in the early mornings—had not circumstances arisen which threatened to turn jest into earnest. The young lady was destined for a convent, and——”

“You must excuse my interrupting you,” said Alexis, in her coldest and haughtiest voice. “But again I must say that I have not the slightest desire to know anything of my cousin’s affairs, or of his actions in the past.”

“And again I must beg of Mademoiselle ten thousand pardons, and request her to have patience but a moment more, and she will see that my reason for telling her this is serious,” answered Bari. “To resume, then—Monsieur leaves Dornbach and the young lady; but the young lady has no relish for convent discipline, and one fine morning she is not to be found. She has followed Monsieur Kenyon and thrown herself on his protection.”

Alexis was sitting quite still now, only her face had grown colder and more contemptuous in its silent scorn.

“Monsieur was in a dilemma, but what could be done? He could not send the girl back to her convent . . . he permitted her to accompany him, and they went to Venice. It was at Venice they met the Signor Lyle.”

Alexis was on her guard now; but she felt the hot blood fly to her cheeks as she heard that name, and she opened a small hand screen which lay by her side, and held it between her face and the flames on the broad hearth.

“The Signor Lyle,” resumed Bari, “took a deep interest in the young lady. He taught her English; he, I believe, did his best also to convert her to his own faith. They were much together, and Mr. Kenyon—his affections being in no way entangled—did not object to the intimacy. In Rome they parted, to the best of my belief, and I heard no more of the—the young lady who objected to convents until—Mademoiselle will excuse my plain speaking—until I discovered accidentally that she was living at a village some distance from here, under the protection of——”

Alexis looked up sharply; her face had grown very pale.

“Of Mr. Lyle,” concluded Bari, with unmoved composure.

“And what,” she asked, with cold disdain, “has this to do with me?”

“It may help to put Mr. Kenyon’s conduct straight before you,” said Bari. “For Mr. Lyle has skilfully contrived to hide his

own weakness under the cloak of Monsieur’s name and identity.”

“What!” cried Alexis, rising breathless and amazed from her chair, and confronting him with incredulous eyes.

“It is true, Mademoiselle, I grieve to say, and Mr. Bray, the good Rector here has at last discovered it; and so angry is he at such a scandalous proceeding that he has dismissed Mr. Lyle from his duties, and is about to represent the affair to the Bishop himself. Now Mademoiselle will understand my reason for giving her the truth of the story, that she may be forewarned when the scandal really breaks out, and I fear it must do so soon.”

“It cannot affect me,” said Alexis proudly. “It is only a piece of my cousin’s folly in the first instance; as for the sequel——”

“Ah, it is the sequel Mademoiselle has yet to hear,” said Bari, dropping his voice and coming a step nearer to the calm and haughty figure. “The unfortunate girl has been missing for some days. Mademoiselle will remember that Mr. Lyle went suddenly away on one of his mysterious journeys, and returned only yesterday in time for service. That journey was to find out what had become of her. He was not successful. This morning, however, he has heard of her discovery in addition to his own disgrace.”

“Where is she?” asked Alexis with effort, though still the calmness and coldness of her face betrayed no sign of what was raging in her heart.

Bari’s eyes drooped, as if to conceal the flash of triumph which leapt from his soul. His voice shook with pretended emotion.

“Mademoiselle, I grieve to have to tell you. I scarce know how to frame so dreadful a truth; but, if I speak not, others will. The poor girl is in prison at E—— on a charge of child-murder!”

THOMAS BEWICK.

WOOD-ENGRAVING is older than printing. Indeed, “block-books,” the earliest European form of printed books, are simply specimens of wood-engraving, in which the block is of the same size as the page, picture and letter-press being both cut on the same piece of wood. This was all very well for books in which the picture part was most prominent; but, when lengthy works came to be printed, it was felt to be almost impossible to cut out page after

page of lettering. Happily, somebody, Dutchman or German, hit upon the expedient of moveable types, and these soon came to be made of metal; and thenceforward wooden blocks were used only for the illustrations, and were generally of smaller size than the pages. Wood-engraving, in these old days, was of very various quality. Sometimes it is little better than what quite an ordinary boy might do if he took up the tools for the first time. Very different is the work of a few men like Albert Dürer and Holbein. And Bewick deserves to rank with the best of the old engravers; for Mr. Ruskin, no mean judge, says that, "since the fifteenth century, no drawing, except Holbein's and Turner's, has been so subtle as Bewick's."

Bewick found wood-engraving in England at a low ebb. It was used for cheap books, for the heading of shop bills, for all sorts of common work; but for anything intended to be permanent, or to show talent, it had been superseded by copper-plate. Those were, all Europe over, the palmy days of the burin; and the engraver ranked almost as high as the painter, to whose works he was often thought to add a charm not found in the original. The Chap-books reproduced by Messrs. Field and Tuer, show into what insignificance the art which Albert Dürer glorified with the touch of genius, had fallen. Bewick began by doing common things; and his boyish attempts are no better than the other work of this time. The difference is that he soon elevated his work, and put genius into it, so that Mr. Ruskin can say ("Elements of Drawing," p. 342): "The execution of the plumage in Bewick's birds is the most masterly thing ever yet done in wood-cutting; it is just worked as Paul Veronese would have worked in wood had he taken to it. His vignettes, too, though too coarse in execution and vulgar in types of form to be good copies, show the highest intellectual power; and there are pieces of sentiment in them, either pathetic or satirical, never since equalled in illustrations of this simple kind. Bewick is the Burns of painting."

What helped to make his birds so good is that he did everything himself. He simply copied Nature, and between his original study and the public he was his own interpreter, completing himself on the block the study which he had made of the bird in its own haunts. He drew and engraved the birds as he

knew them; and this makes the difference between his work and that of some of his followers who possessed much more technical skill. Those who saw his drawings at the Bewick Exhibition of 1880 had a rare treat. The "Kitty Wren," for instance, is excellent in the engraving; one can see the little creature puffing out its feathers. But the warm tints of purple and subdued grey in its throat; the bronze-like lustre on its russet back, with bars of lighter colour and bands of almost black; make the drawing far superior to the woodcut. Let no one be disappointed because he does not appreciate Bewick all at once. You must learn to notice his accuracy and the wealth of his invention before you can understand the secret of his power, and how his work is better than the coarse, flashy things in the illustrated papers. The Bewick Exhibition was valuable, because it showed the different stages by which he reached the perfect finish of his mature work. But his life is as interesting as his work; indeed, you cannot appreciate the latter without knowing something of the former.

Born in 1753 at Cherryburn on the Tyne, half-way between Newcastle and Hexham, Bewick was a thorough North-Countryman. His high forehead and shape of skull were something like Scott's; his eyes were brimful of humour; his face showed the honesty and good sense which mark the race. He had, too, that self-appreciation, which is not conceit, because there is something in the man of which he may be proud; and he had that love of praise which often goes along therewith. Of this a friend, who was with him at Buxton in 1826, gives a curious instance. Bewick was there for gout in the stomach, but he was well enough to dine at the public table. "One day, over the wine, a dispute arose between two gentlemen about a bird; one affirmed he had looked it out in Bewick; the other at once replied: 'Well, that settles it, for Bewick is next to nature.' Here the old gentleman seized me by the thigh with his hand-vice of a grasp, and continued to keep up the shuttle-cock of conversation playfully to his highest satisfaction; for bird after bird of his got the highest praise from those who were evidently competent judges; while they who praised him so ardently little imagined whose ears imbibed all their honest incense."

Bewick's father owned a small land-sale colliery, i.e., a colliery, the coal from which was sold at the pit's mouth, not sent to

agents at the sea-ports; and young Bewick, who was a very imp of mischief, used, when quite a little boy, to frighten the pitmen out of their wits, by dressing up "bogles," making unearthly noises below ground, and otherwise playing on their fear of ghosts.

He grew up with an intense love of the country, and, above all, of Tyneside; and, in his "Memoirs," a book well worth reading, he tells how, when he himself had left London in disgust, he wrote to a friend praying him to "lap up" and come away too, adding, "for my part I'm still of the same mind. I would rather be herding sheep on Mickley bank-top than stay in London, although for doing so I was to be made Premier of England." His father, says the "Memoirs," was "much respected among his neighbours, and perhaps a little feared." He had the cheerfulness and humour, and fund of anecdote which comes of perfect health, for "he used to wonder how folks felt when they were ill." He was severe with his children; but with Thomas, at any rate (for John turned out rather a scapegrace, though he, too, did some rare good work), the severity answered well. His wife was a Cumberland lassie, daughter of Thomas Wilson, statesman (i.e. small copyholder), schoolmaster, and curate (or some say, parish clerk) of Ainstable.

She learnt Latin; and when, at her father's death she went to keep house for a relative, Mr. Gregson, vicar and schoolmaster, of Ovingham, near Cherryburn, she was able on occasion to lessen the burden of his tasks. Here John Bewick met and married her; and to Ovingham School, just across the river, Thomas was sent, and began filling his slates and copy-books with sketches, and chalking all sorts of designs on the grave-stones, until at last a friend took pity on him and supplied him with that rare commodity, paper, which gift another supplemented with a camel's hair brush and shells of colours. Then he began, choosing for pleasure the birds that he loved so well, and painting for profit likenesses of his neighbours' dogs and horses. He would also draw hares and fowmarts, and badgers, and hunting scenes; but he was early sickened of the cruelty of field sports. Once he was out with the harriers, when, he says, "the hare leaped into my arms and began to scream like a child. A farmer who came up said, 'Just give her to me, Tom,' and I complied, thinking he was better able than I to

save her life. Instead of this he proposed to the rest of the field to have a bit more sport, and, breaking one of her legs, gave her a start and began the chase. I wandered away to a little distance, oppressed by my own feelings; but learned with pleasure that the intended victim escaped after all." Soon after he knocked over a bird with a stone, "by no means the first I had hit, but the first I caught alive. It looked me piteously in the face, and would, as I thought, could it have spoken, have asked me why I had taken away its life. I felt greatly hurt at what I had done, and did not quit it all the afternoon, turning it over and over, admiring its plumage, its bill, and every part. It was a bullfinch; I did not then know its name, but was told that it was a little Matthew Martin. That was the last bird I killed, but many have been killed since on my account." His tenderness of heart did not stop his teasing the pet dog of Miss Gregson, his master's daughter; he looked on it as a "fat, useless animal," and used to delight to get it into the churchyard, and setting a boy at every outlet, to hunt it round and round till it was ready to drop. One day Miss Gregson came up in the midst of the dog chase. "She meant to scold," says Bewick, "but such was the sweetness of her disposition that she did not know how; and after some embarrassing attempts, she reminded me of her uniform kindness to me and of our being related, and with irresistible persuasions made me see the impropriety of my conduct. This left its mark; and from that day forward, I never plagued any of the girls at school."

School life, vermin-hunting over the snow, helping at home by carrying hay to the sheep on the fell when the river was too swollen to get across to Ovingham, or scaling—i.e. spreading the mole-heaps over—the pastures, or cleaning out the byre (cow-shed), filled up his days. His chief amusement was fishing; and he would wander off from early morning, till his father's whistle, sounding up the glen, called him back at night.

At school he was always in some mischief, and, when the floggings recommended by his father ceased to move him, Mr. Gregson used to lock him and his fellow culprits in the belfry; but this turned out disastrous for the bells, so Bewick was shut up alone in the church.

"I climbed a pillar," says he, "with the help of a rope or handkerchief, as I used

to do in getting up large trees. When my master came in to let me out, I was astride on one of the capitals, and he did not see me. He called, but I made no answer. He then examined the doors, and, finding them fast, marched up and down the aisles in great distress of mind, frequently exclaiming: 'God bless me.' When he was gone I slipped down, and found the choir door only bolted on the inside; so I waded the river and posted home, and slept in my old asylum, the hay loft."

This was the turning-point in what, till then, had been "a life of warfare."

Mr. Gregson asked him to dinner, and, afterwards began "a plain, open, friendly remonstrance on my past conduct and its evil tendency, and the pain and trouble it had given him; urging me, in such a persuasive tone, to desist from it that I fell into a flood of tears. While I remained at school he never again had occasion to find fault with me, for I never dared to encounter another of those friendly meetings."

At fourteen it was thought time to apprentice him, and, as he insisted on going somewhere where he could see pictures and draw them, he was placed with Ralph Beilby, the printer and engraver, who did a very multifarious business in clock-faces, door-plates, sword-blades, seals, dies, coffin-plates, shop-cards, and bar-bills, and so on. He soon got into disgrace, for, on his first Sunday, three rude lads insulted him, and, when he knocked one of them down, fell on and beat him badly.

Beilby was a strict Sabbatarian; but he was also a man of sense, and he thenceforth invited the lad to spend his Sunday evenings with his family in Bible reading. The workshop was a dull, dingy place in the centre of the town, and the confinement, with too low a workshop bench, soon made him ill.

"Don't stoop over your work; give up your incessant reading; and get out in the air after shop hours," was the doctor's advice.

So Bewick took to regulating his diet and way of life, reading Lewis's "Cornaro, the Centenarian," and such like books; becoming an almost total abstainer, and, instead of taking a meat dinner, often walking out to Elswick and dining off a penny-worth of bread-and-milk. He got stronger and hardier than ever, and would think nothing of walking to Cherryburn after seven on a winter's night to have a look at his parents.

The Beilbys were an artistic family; and two of the brothers gave Bewick drawing lessons, with Copeland's heraldic ornaments as the text-book! Their taking up with wood-engraving was due to Charles Hutton, the mathematician, who took a fancy to having his "Ladies' Diary" and his "Mensuration" illustrated with woodcuts.

Bewick was first set to roughly cut the corners out of Beilby's diagrams, the work being finished by the master; but he got on so quickly that he was soon trusted to complete the blocks. The "Mensuration" contains his first efforts, and very uninteresting they are. He soon improved, however, making his own tools, especially a double-pointed chisel for cutting a line of equal thickness. Then he began horn-book alphabets, a "lottery-book" of birds and beasts (1771), in which "p stands for phrentick (sic)," a very quaint figure of a poor madman lying on his straw. "Little Red Riding-Hood" followed, and then "Gay's Fables," and "Æsop's."

Some of this work brought him substantial rewards. The cut to the fable, "The Huntsman and the Old Hounds," was sent by his master, with a few others, to the "Society for the Encouragement of Arts," and he was allowed to choose whether he would have a medal or seven guineas. He chose the latter, and handed them to his mother.

And so the lad went on, taking in everything except wickedness. This he eschewed. Even when, having quarrelled with one of the Beilbys, he went to lodge with a flax-dresser, who also "took in tramps and scamps," Bewick was unscathed. "Their conduct," he says, "was wicked in the extreme;" but on him it produced no feeling but disgust. He had healthy principles; and, both here and afterwards amid low London life, they stood him in good stead. Nay, he got good out of his surroundings; for the flax-dresser was also a bird-fancier, and from the bird-catchers and others who came about, he gleaned much curious information which came out by and by in his great Bird Book.

One of his comrades deserves notice—Gilbert Gray, trained for the Kirk, but then, with his son, in the bookbinding trade. Gray used the strictest self-denial; and, when his savings had reached from ten to thirty pounds, he would spend them either in releasing deserving debtors or in getting moral and entertaining books printed for young men.

At his house, Bewick did most of his reading. He persuaded young Gray to rise very early and let him in, and then he fell on the books that were waiting to be bound, and kept at them till work time. Many of these books were theological; and we may fancy how muddled he became with a high Calvinist treatise one week and a volume of Methodist sermons the next. Yet he got through far better than one would expect, for he says: "As far as I can judge, all we can do is to commune with and reverence the Creator, and to yield with humility and resignation to His will. With the most serious intention of forming a right judgement, all the conclusion I can come to is this, that there is only one God and one religion; and I know of no better way of what is called serving God, than that of being good to His creatures." Among his friends was an aggressive philanthropist, Tom Spence, who always got angry when his Socialist theories were criticised. Bewick always fell foul of these; and once Spence said: "If I'd been as stout as you I'd ha' thrashed you; but I can do it this way, so have at you," producing a pair of cudgels. He did not do it, though; for Bewick blackened his thighs and arms so effectually that he never tried that game again.

Newcastle, we see, was lively enough, and gave the young fellow plenty of varied society; and when he went home to keep Christmas, there were the dances, in which lairds and farmers joined to the music of the "small pipes," and then the "fèul-ploughs," (sword dances), and the vermin-tracking across the snow, of which he was as fond as in his schoolboy days. When he was out of his time, he began to take walking tours, the first to his mother's place in Cumberland, she carefully stitching three guineas into his waistband in case of accident. He probably did not know the charm of the Lakes; for when at Ainstable he actually turned his back on them and went by way of Carlisle to Scotland, wandering far and near, and penetrating even into the Highlands. His whistling powers were to him as useful as Goldsmith in France found his fiddle. The story of his travels, and the Tyneside airs that he whistled, so delighted his hosts that they would not hear of payment; and all he could do was now and then to slip something into the children's hands when he went away. His diary is curious: Fountains Abbey he calls "a delightfull place." He saw it from Ripon, where Saturday and Sunday cost him

eight and sixpence; whereas at Brough, where he "stopt the night on account of excessive hunger," his bill would have been only one shilling and twopence, and twopence half-penny for "bad tobacco," had he not lost one shilling on a light guinea. His expenses at a farm-house were usually fivepence or sixpence. Once he gave "twopence to the girl." His charities were small. "Fond David" receives a half-penny; "a dum man," the same sum. In old age he was more profuse; children knew that in his pockets they were sure to find an apple, a whistle, or a bit of gingerbread; and, after threatening the mob of urchins that generally followed him through the streets with "Get awa', bairns; get awa'; I hae none for ye the day," he would at last capitulate, dive into a shop for "sax penn'orth o' bawbees," and, flinging them among the children, say with a merry flourish of his cudgel: "There, chields; fit yersels wi' ballats, and gang hame singing to yer mammies."

As soon as he was back from what his young Newcastle friends called "begging his way through Scotland," he went on board a collier, and after three stormy weeks reached London; and, at once getting amongst a group of Newcastle friends, began work for Curran and Newberry, of St. Paul's Churchyard. But he did not take to the Londoners as he had taken to the Scotch. "Their impudent remarks often led me into quarrels of a kind I wished to avoid, and had not been used to engage in. Besides, notwithstanding being so much gratified with a variety of excellent performances in painting, statuary, carving, engraving, and so on, I tired of London. The county of my old friends, the manners of the people, the scenery of Tyneside, seemed altogether to form a Paradise for me."

"How long before you come back?" asked his employer. "Never" was the emphatic reply. The only thing that grieved Bewick was the fear of having to set up at Newcastle an opposition to the Bellby. From this he was happily saved by Hodgson, a Newcastle printer, settled in town, who said: "If you will go in spite of such good prospects as you've got, you shan't want for work. I'll give you enough for two years; and besides that, I'll set my Germans" (for even then the German workmen were competing with our own) "to cut in any blocks that you design."

So in 1777 Bewick came home; and very soon all fear of competition was re-

moved by his being taken into partnership with his late master. Life was thenceforth very straightforward for him. The firm of "Beilby and Bewick" did, as before, all kinds of work. Old "Newcastle Courants," "Durham Chronicles," and so on, from 1779 onwards, have Bewick's headings—real works of art, and also his woodcuts to advertisements. Above "Lost, Stolen, or Strayed," he designed, with grim humour, a man riding hard towards a gibbet, with a fiend sitting behind him. Over a million impressions were struck off from this block, "showing" (says Bewick), "how much more durable wood blocks are than copper-plates." Among the shop-bills is a tobacco-nist's, with the negro wearing a crown and apron of palm leaves, whose effigy used to be as common at our tobacco-shop doors as that of the snuff-taking Scotchman.

In 1785 Bewick's mother fell ill, and he was indefatigable in his attention, sending his friend Dr. Bailes, and going over himself twice or thrice a week with medicine. She died, and his father "never held up his head again." After losing both parents he took a wife, having made up his mind not to marry till they were gone, that his care for them might not be divided. "The smirking lasses of Tyneside had long thrown out their jokes against me as being a woman-hater, but in this they were greatly mistaken. Having long considered it every man's duty, for his children's sake, to get a healthy woman for his wife, I permitted no mercenary consideration to interfere. . . . I had seen your mother in prosperity and in adversity, and in the latter state she appeared to me to the greatest advantage." It was a thoroughly happy match.

After this "Burns's Poems," Davison's "Buffon,"* Bewick's own "History of Quadrupeds," etc., appeared in rapid succession, the English creatures that he could study contrasting in their greater naturalness with those, such as the giraffe, of which he could only catch a glimpse in a caravan. His largest plate is the wonderful Chillingham bull, to study for which he walked fifty miles, across by Alnwick, and after all, "as I could make no drawing while he was wheeling about, and then fronting us with the rest of the herd, I had to try to see one who had been conquered

by his rival and driven to seek shelter alone. And in order to get a good look at one of this sort, I had to creep on my hands and knees to leeward, and out of his sight, and thus get my sketch."

This marvellous cut, about eleven inches by eight, should surely stop the mouths of those who are given to belittle Bewick as compared with the adepts of modern schools.

His great virtue was "sincerity," and never did he show it more than in this white "survival" of the British period, as he stands pawing the ground under a mass of oak trees. The happy connoisseur, who has studied one of the vellum impressions of this, made before the block split through being left in the sun, has seen Bewick at his best.

There is not much more to tell. One of the most interesting scenes in his later life was his hospitably entertaining Audubon, the Morris of American birds. Audubon had lost all his notes and drawings, but had the energy to begin again; of which indomitable perseverance Bewick showed his sense by consoling him with a splendid copy of his own "Birds."

Next year he paid a visit to London; but was so infirm, that, when a friend took him for a drive to the Zoological Gardens, he could not even rouse himself to get out to see the animals. Yet he wrote home amusing letters about "the Cockneys, with whom the march of intellect had not equalled the march of impudence during the half century since I saw them."

Latterly his work had been falling off. The "Fishes," which he never completed, are feeble compared with his "Birds." His last project was to try Papillon's plan of a series of wood-blocks of the same design, to be printed one over the other, so as to give more richness of effect and greater variety of tint. But he did not live to carry out the design, dying, after a few days' illness, in 1828.

I spoke of his grim humour. He practised it on his cheating coal-merchant, showing him a tail-piece of a demon driving a man in his cart under a gallows. The likeness was so unmistakeable, and the moral so clear, that the man went down on his knees, confessed, and begged for pardon.

He had a proper sense of his own importance; and when a very grand visitor, like the Duke of Northumberland, came to his workshop, he would take off his hat for a moment and then put it on again, like

* Davison's partner at Alnwick was Catnach, who took to drink, sold out of the firm, and went to Seven Dials. There his son founded a very successful business, publishing illustrated accounts of murder cases, "last dying speeches," and so on.

the village schoolmaster, who declined to uncover in the presence of George the Third.

He was curious about other methods, and once actually drew a lithograph. In his own work he never used the old "cross-hatching," believing that every effect could be produced by parallel lines, broader or narrower, nearer or closer, and, in the lighter parts, by his own invention of a little sinking in the surface of the block. The gradations in his style may best be studied in the different "Æsop's Fables;" while perhaps it is in the book-plates that he did for friends that the foliage is most delicately drawn. Study these, and you will admit that he deserves all that Mr. Ruskin has said of him.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

JULY.

HERRICK, the quaint historian poet, has left it on record as a tradition of his time that

First April, she with mellow show'rs,
Opens the way for early flow'rs;
Then after her comes smiling May,
In a more rich and sweet array;
Next enters June, and brings us more
Gems, than those two that went before;
Then, lastly, July comes, and she
More wealth brings in than all those three.

Whatever may have been the characteristics of these months, it is certain that April and May have lost them all now. July in the past was apparently a month of pleasure with our ancestors, for another poet quaintly tells us that

Hot July has in time its proper jobs:
Cudgells, Bulls, Cocking, and Sacheverellian mobs;
What work October with July will make
At sessions, 'sises, and at country wake;
At Cocking, Cudgells, Bulls, and such like sport,
Much could we say, but have not paper for't.

Quintilis was the old Latin name for July, it being the fifth month among the early Romans. Its present name was conferred on it by Marc Antony, in honour of Julius Cæsar, who was born in this month, and who improved the Calendar. The Saxons gave to July the name of "Hen Monath," meaning foliage month; and also "Hey Monath," because therein they usually mowed and made their hay harvest.

In respect of weather, July must rank as an unfortunate month, especially if it be ushered in with a downfall of rain. In such a case we are told:

If the first of July be rainy weather,
'Twill rain more or less for four weeks together.

According to one ancient Calendar, July has only two "dies malæ," or unlucky days, namely, the sixth and seventh. This was the opinion of almanack makers in the time of Henry the Second, but by 1616 the bad luck of these days had vanished, and in their place there had been substituted the fifteenth and twentieth.

Our superstitious forefathers appropriated to the different months certain precious stones, there being thought to be some connection with the planets and seasons. In this way, the onyx was set apart for the month of July, though, according to another writer,

The glowing Ruby should adorn
Those who in warm July are born;
Then will they be exempt and free
From love's doubts and anxiety.

The first day of interest in this month is the third, commonly known as the beginning of the "Dog Days," which do not end until the 11th August. The term was applied to these days because they are supposed to precede and follow the heliacal rising of the star Sirius, in the constellation of the Greater Dog, in the morning. It was an old belief that the increasing heat of the season was influenced by the appearance of this star, while the liability of dogs to rabies, in consequence of the heat of the season, was also connected with the same star. There was nothing but accident in the collusion, yet dogs were once slain without mercy from this day. At Argos, there was a festival instituted for the killing of dogs at this season.

We pass on to the tenth of the month, and then reach the first important Saint's day—Saint Oswald. Though very little known, Oswald was one of the British Monarch Saints, and flourished, as King of Northumbria, in the seventh century. He was a very pious man, and was in the habit of erecting large wooden crosses wherever he went. He founded the town of Oswestry, which to the Welsh, is known as Croesoswallt, or Oswald's Cross. Oswald was killed in battle A.D. 635, and about his remains there arose an odour of sanctity.

Just outside Oswestry is a well, known as Saint Oswald's, of which Mr. F. M. Dovaston, writing in 1842, said: "The feeble and infirm still believe and bathe in the well, and did more so until it was enclosed in the noisy school playground. Bottles of its water are carried to wash the eyes of those who are dim and shortsighted, or the tardy or erring legs of such as are of weak understandings." It was formerly

believed, that any wish breathed while bathing the face in the water of this well would be granted. The cause of this wonderful virtue is said to be, that the head of King Oswald, severed by his enemies from the trunk, was thrown into this well. The death of Oswald is variously said to have occurred at Oswestry and at Winwick, near Warrington; which really is entitled to the honour, I cannot pretend to say, but both places have churches dedicated to his memory.

About the Church of Winwick, above referred to, a strange story is told concerning the selection of its site. The foundation of the church was laid where the founder had directed, and the close of the first day's work marked some progress in the business. The approach of night, however, brought with it an event which not a little disquieted the inhabitants around the spot. A pig was heard to scream aloud, as it ran hastily to the new church site, where, taking up a stone in its mouth, it carried the stone to the spot sanctified by the death of Saint Oswald. In this manner the pig employed itself through the whole night, until it had succeeded in removing all the stones which the builders had laid. In support of this tradition there is pointed out the figure of a pig sculptured on the tower of the church, just above the western entrance.

Five days elapse, and then we come to a Saint more notorious than any other in either the English or the Romish calendar, and who may be described as one of the "clerks of the weather." I mean Saint Swithun or Swithun, for his name is spelt both ways. The day dedicated to his honour is the fifteenth of July.

Saint Swithun, who was made Bishop of Winchester by King Ethelwolf, was of noble parentage, and a man of good learning. He prevailed upon the King to enact a new law, by which he gave a tenth of the land to the Church, which was the commencement of tithes. On his death-bed he desired to be buried in the churchyard, which was accordingly done; but on his canonisation the Monks, thinking it a disgrace that the Saint should lie in the open churchyard, instead of under the choir, determined to remove the body into the church. This was to have been done on the fifteenth of July; but it rained so violently upon that and the forty succeeding days, that the Monks had to relinquish their intentions as impious, and they then built a chapel over his remains instead. Such

is the foundation for the belief, common enough, that

If on Saint Swithun's it does rain,
For forty days it will remain.

Another prognostic, rather fuller of information, but to the same effect, says:

Saint Swithun's Day, if thou dost rain,
For forty days this will remain;
Saint Swithun's Day, if thou be fair,
For forty days 'twill rain na mair.

The old superstition has been shown over and over again to be false; but still it lingers, and occasionally there is a tolerably long spell of wet weather about the time, but this is accounted for by the fact that round Saint Swithun's Day is what is known as the wet season.

The following extraordinary story is told concerning Saint Swithun. Emma, the mother of Edward the Confessor, was accused upon the averments of Robert à Clerc, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was a favourite with the King, not only of incontinence with Alwayne, Bishop of Winchester, but also with having poisoned her son Alfred. Alwayne was deprived of the See and put into prison, while the King took possession of his mother's lands and put her in ward in the Abbey of Wormell. The Queen made "dole enow," and demanded an appeal to the fire ordeal, undertaking to step over nine red-hot iron shares—four for herself and five for the Bishop.

The appeal was granted, and the day appointed at Saint Swithun's, Winchester. The Queen, upon being brought to the holy place, immediately sought St. Swithun's shrine, where she remained all night in weeping and praying, "that piteous it was to see." When she had fallen into a little sleep, Saint Swithun came to her and said: "Daughter, be steadfast in undergoing the doom; I am Swithun to whom thou prayest, and forgive thy son this deed. And of passing the fiery iron have thou not any fear."

The Queen, thus encouraged, underwent the trial next day with great firmness. The King sat in his throne to give judgement, and the Queen having been brought before him, professed her innocence, and in reply to the King's stern demand, declared her determination to perform the trial.

The historian thus proceeds: "The Queen was led forth with many a weeping eye of Bishops and Highmen, and of others who saw it. Her rich clothes were stripped off; but after that she was covered, her

body with a mantle, a veil about her head ; her legs were bare beneath the knee, that men might see each step. Alas ! ill was it becoming a Queen to be so naked ! Men brought forth the fiery shares and laid them all in a row on the bare earth, swept, to show God's grace. The Bishops blessed the shares, and the Queen also, and led her forth on either side to perform the trial. The Queen thought altogether on God, and cast her eyes to heaven, and never looked at all downward ; and as they all saw, she stepped upon those fiery irons, every step quite clean ; neither did she herself know when it was, nor stop once. There was joy and pleasure enough, and many a weeping eye, first for fear, and afterwards for joy, when they saw this. The Bishop who led her also wept for joy ; and praised God and Saint Swithun, who had done this miracle, and led her out of the church. The Queen began to cry, 'for the love of Jesus Christ do me not the wrong to inflict my penance without, but in all manner as it was ordained me here in the Holy Church.'

" 'Madam,' quoth the Bishop, 'thou hast performed it already.'

" 'So help me God,' quoth the Queen. 'I did not know it before ; no fire I felt nor saw in this place. But now first I see it, praised be God !'

Another ten days bring us to the twenty-fifth, and St. James's Day, formerly a feast of some importance in the English and Roman Church.

Saint James was the first Apostolic martyr, and suffered by sword, under Herod Agrippa, about A.D. 43. On this day apples used to be blessed by the priests of Rome, and oysters used to come in. The latter were prohibited by Act of Parliament "until Saint James's Day." Since the new style has been introduced, August the fifth is regarded as the first day for oysters. Under the old style there was a vulgar superstition that whosoever ate oysters on St. James's Day would never want money. In the grotto formed of oyster-shells and lighted with a votive candle, to which on old St. James's Day the passer-by was earnestly entreated to contribute by cries of "please remember the grotto," we have a memorial both of the old regulation about oysters and of the world-renowned shrine of St. James at Compostella.

An old saw informs us that :

If the rye be green on Saint George's Day,
Fresh bread on Saint James's eat we may.

It is undoubtedly of importance for the welfare of the country that we should have a good spring, which should be well advanced on Saint George's Day ; but our domestic economy will be very little disturbed whether we have this year's bread on Saint James's Day or at Christmas. A harvest gathered in, threshed, and the corn ground as early as July the twenty-fifth, would be a novelty in these days of cold springs and late summers.

There is a Saint of great esteem in the Romish Church, whom I have purposely missed out of her proper order, that is St. Margaret, an Italian virgin, who was martyred in the year 278 A.D., and whose day is observed on the twentieth of July. On this day, in Paris, formerly women who expected to become mothers before the year was out, proceeded to church to invoke the protection of St. Margaret.

In the month of July there was annually celebrated, for four centuries, at Hamburg a strange festival, known as "The Cherry Feast." It was for the most part confined to young folks, who, when cherries were ripe, usually early in the month, marched through the streets of the town bearing branches laden with ripe, luscious fruit. Like every other ceremony it celebrates an event, which has not yet been forgotten. In the year 1432 a great Hussite army besieged the city of Hamburg, under the command of Procopius the Great. The war had raged for many years, and on both sides it had become both bitter and cruel. When they saw the army outside their walls the people of Hamburg became extremely frightened, as they could not hope to hold out long against such odds. A council of chief citizens was held to devise some method of saving the town.

Nothing seemed feasible until someone suggested that they should send out all the little children, for, said one, "the sight will surely melt the hearts of the soldiers, and they will do us no harm."

The suggestion was acted upon, and all the children of the town were gathered together from their homes and set in marching order. The gates of the city were opened, and they were told to march out to the army. Great was the surprise of the army to see the gates of the city swing open ; but greater still their surprise when they saw march out an army of little children, clad in white. When they heard the pattering of the tiny feet, and when the little ones drew up timidly before the tents, the warriors were fairly conquered,

and tears filled their eyes. They, who had come to rob, kill, and burn, threw down their arms, and, gathering beautiful branches full of fruit off the cherry trees, sent the children back to their parents with those branches and a message of peace, which was faithfully observed. The children won a great and bloodless victory, and, in commemoration of it, these branches were until recently, if not now, carried through the streets by the children.

With this beautiful legend, I may, I think, conclude the notice of this month.

PAST AND FUTURE.

GOD called her home, ye say ! Ah, well, she's dead.
Her tender feet no longer tread life's ways ;
Her soft, small hands, that wore the marriage-ring
So short a time, are folded. We were wed
Meseemeth but a fleeting summer day ;
And she is gone, and life's an empty thing !

Yet do I know—the while my heart is sore,
The while hot tears course slowly down my cheek—
Though veiled sorrow sits my hearth beside,
That some day life will be a joy once more ;
That some day time will heal ; will bid me seek
Another love, and woo another bride.

I, standing here, and looking at her face—
Her sweet young face, with its fair girlish brow,
Her soft brown hair, unlined, unchanged, and
bright—
Remember sadly all the tiny space
In which we loved ; yet, quivering from the blow,
I know I shall forget this piteous sight,

'Tis the worst part, my dear ; if I could mourn
With shattered heart, my whole life long, I would.
But think, one year—only one year was ours—
Out of my life : must all then be forlorn ?
Nay, though thou'rt dead, life still can be most
good,
Though thou art dead, still spring will give her
flowers.

I trust thou may'st not know, in that far land
Beyond the stars, that time will bring me rest.
And yet I think thou would'st not grudge me peace,
Ah, God ! be good ! and let me understand :
Let me believe that all Thou dost is best.
Nor let her suffer, when my sufferings cease.

Fold smooth the shroud over her sweet young form,
And carry her away, since it must be.
My sorrow shall be buried in her tomb.
At least, she lieth sheltered from life's storm.
So will I leave her there, and fervently
Will pray that light may rise beyond life's gloom.

SOUTH AFRICAN SKETCHES.

AN IDYL OF GONG-GONG.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

OF all the mining camps which sprang up upon the quiet banks of the Vaal River, during the great rush in the first year of the discovery of diamonds in South Africa, that of Gong-gong was undoubtedly the most picturesque. It owed

its existence to a sudden bend of the river, which, cutting into the abrupt red heights of Cawood's Hope, on the opposite side, left stretched along under the low hills of the northern bank, a broad and level spit of river detritus. So favourable a spot as this spit was not likely to escape the observation of the hundreds of "prospecting" parties who were scattered up and down the river ; a few trial holes were dug, and, the yield of diamonds being good, work was commenced in earnest ; diggers flocked in ; and the camp was established.

Gong-gong, however, never attained any great pre-eminence as a camp, and though some two hundred claims were opened, they were soon abandoned for the superior attractions of Cawood's Hope and Seven Hells. Shortly after this the opening of the dry diggings at Du Toit's Pan and the New Rush ruined all the camps on the river, Gong-gong amongst the rest ; and in December, 1871, only a score of tents stood dotted about among the clumps of acacia, which still fringed the confusion of yawning pits and unshapely heaps of stones of the disused claims. The few diggers who remained were either sceptical persons, who declined to believe in the lasting prosperity of the dry diggings ; enthusiasts, who were firmly persuaded that Gong-gong would be the camp of the future ; or indolent men, who liked the locality and were too lazy to move.

And indeed the scenery was sufficiently pretty to count for something. The broad and swift river swept onward between its red banks with many a graceful curve, and murmured and babbled over the pebbly shallows which were said to have given birth to the native name of Gong-gong, or "laughing waters." At the drift the waters leaped and sparkled, and the sunlight flashed on the glistening surface of thousands of exquisite river agates—garnets, red and white cornelian, rose-quartz, jasper, chalcedony, and green beryl—lavishly strewn around by the hand of Nature, but regarded as mere dirt by the digger in search of a short cut to fortune. The precipitous banks on the Cawood's Hope side were clothed with tall and graceful African willows, while the sandy spit at Gong-gong was covered with thickets of the golden-flowered acacia and the pink-blossomed sugar-bush. Tall rushes rustled and swayed at the water's edge ; clusters of arum lilies, known to the Afri-cander as "pig lilies," whitened every gully and hollow ; and low, undulating

hills, sparsely covered with rhinoster bush, closed in the view.

A short distance above the half-deserted camp the river was so quiet that the "rietbok" lurked undisturbed amid the cool rushes during the hot noon, and at morning and evening the "duiker" might be seen stealing down amongst the bushes to drink. One gazed down upon the bright, sparkling river and the fresh green foliage of Gong-gong with quite a sense of grateful relief, after having tramped the nine miles of monotonous and dreary road from Klipdrift—nine miles of bare plain, backed by bare, flat-topped hills, and with nothing but an occasional stunted camel-thorn, stretching out its gaunt limbs like a weird sign-post, to break the sameness of the view.

After the dusty and fever-stricken camps on the De Beer plain had drawn away nine-tenths of the diggers from the river, Gong-gong became the Sleepy Hollow of the Diamond Fields, where men dreamed out a lazy existence, forgotten by the noisy, neighbouring world, and utterly careless as to its doings. The inhabitants of Klipdrift and Pniel might be exasperated almost past endurance by the sarcasms of the noisy, swaggering, and booted men who came down in crowds from the New Rush for change of air and ablutionary purposes; but Gong-gong was too much out of the way to be visited by any of these gentry, and was like some decayed and quiet old county town, cast into the shade and despised by its precocious manufacturing neighbour.

The fifty odd diggers who, towards the close of the year 1871, formed five-sixths of the white population of Gong-gong, were one afternoon much excited by a startling rumour which spread through the camp. According to this rumour no less a strange animal than a woman had unexpectedly descended from an ox waggon which had, a few minutes earlier in the day, arrived at the canteen which was managed by the enterprising Nathaniel Cobb. For months woman had been an unknown creature in the camp, and the excitement, consequently, ran high.

In the early days of the diggings, a few ladies, predatory in habit, animal in instinct, uncleanly in person, and scanty in attire, had honoured the camp with their presence. These ladies had been representatives of the "noble savage," as exemplified in the Koranna tribe of Hot-tentots, and their knowledge of the English

language had been confined to a number of expressions which were, in the strictest sense of the word, unparliamentary. On the decadence of Gong-gong they had shifted the scene of their depredations to other camps, where man and money were more abundant.

The rumour, however, which was now agitating the camp, said that the new-comer was not as the former representatives of her sex had been. It was even believed that she looked respectable; and when James Markwell, who had been passing by Cobb's canteen when she alighted from the waggon, and who had with praise-worthy zeal at once proceeded to the claims to tell the news, asserted that she wore boots and stockings, her claims to that high honour were accepted without question.

"Yaller leather boots, and white stockings with red stripes, as I'm a living man," reiterated Markwell, to the knot of bearded and dusty men who were leaning upon pick-axes and spades in careless attitudes around him; "yaller leather boots and white stockings with red stripes."

The speaker was a tall and thin man, attired in moleskin trousers, long boots, and a red flannel shirt, the sleeves of which latter, rolled back nearly to the shoulder, exposed two long and lean, but sinewy arms, with an abnormal development of joint at the elbow; while the unnatural contiguity of his knees, when his feet were unduly separated, told of a similar disproportion of knee-joint. His face was indicative of a curious mixture of simplicity and thoughtfulness. The prominent brow, with its straight and shaggy eyebrows, overhung and threw into shadow two deep-set and piercing grey eyes; but the mouth, half hidden as it was by a huge sandy moustache, was patently weak and irresolute; while the chin receded in a manner that not even the luxuriant growth of yellow beard could altogether disguise.

"A relation of Cobb's, I s'pose," ventured one of the group.

"His wife, p'raps."

"Or his mother," suggested another; "eh, Jimmy?"

"Couldn't be his mother," replied Markwell, who seemed to think it was his duty to undertake the defence of the personal attractions of the lady whose advent he had been the first to announce. "She didn't appear to be more'n nineteen or twenty."

"White, of course?"

"Ye-es, whitish. Pretty nigh pure white, I should think."

An immediate relaxation of interest was apparent at this announcement of the fact that the fair arrival was a representative of two or more varieties of the human race; and all appeared disappointed.

"It's just like Markwell," said Stokes, with a shrug, "to come taking us all from our work to tell us that a nigger woman has turned up."

"But she ain't nigger, Stokes," hurriedly explained the aggrieved Markwell; "she's very nigh white, and what colour there is I take to be Malay."

"Well, anyhow, nigger or Malay, she can't be a relation of Cobb's."

"No. Who can she be?"

As there appeared to be no prospect of this enigma being immediately solved, the men one by one slouched away, for it was near sunset, and the day's work was done; while Markwell went up the narrow path through the fringe of acacia scrub, which still threw a veil over the rude nakedness of the earth, where it had been scored, and pitted, and heaped up with stones and "stuff" in the palmier days of the camp.

About half-way up the gentle ascent, Markwell stopped at a canteen which stood on the right-hand side of the devious path. This canteen was presided over by a gentleman named Randall, and was known to the diggers as "Randall's Bar." Randall and Cobb were the only two canteen-keepers in the camp, and, in order to support the old aphorism that two of a trade never agree, they were rivals and bitter enemies.

The fact was that, thirsty as were the inhabitants of Gong-gong as a rule, they were insufficient in number to guarantee those profits which canteen-keepers expected in those days at the Diamond Fields. Fifty regular patrons, with incidental Kaffirs, Hottentots, and wayfarers thrown in, would be a very good basis for one canteen; but, when divided between two, they sufficed for neither. Each proprietor, therefore, grumbled and talked of soon going away, while each really intended staying where he was, hoping that the other would move off and leave him a clear field.

As a consequence of there being two canteens with rival proprietors, Gong-gong society was divided into two sets, and each bar was haunted by its own particular supporters. No ill-feeling, however, existed between these two parties beyond

the personal hatred of the two principals for each other; for men are, in this respect, unlike women, and they neither become violent partisans about matters which do not concern them, nor do they necessarily quarrel when much thrown together and deprived of the society of the opposite sex.

Standing by the door of Randall's Bar, leaning against one of the uprights of the tent-frame, and basking in the warm glow of the setting sun, was Italy, the representative of art at the Diamond Fields. He had given out, on his arrival from the New Rush, that he had come down to sketch; but he had now been a fortnight at Gong-gong, and had done nothing but lounge daily on a bank of fragrant heath, in the shade of a spreading tree, with his hat slouched over his eyes, and his pipe in his mouth, lazily listening to the babble of the water as it leaped over the rapids, the hum of the insects, and the chirp of the tree-cricket.

This exhausting kind of exercise, and a pretty regular attendance at Randall's, had occupied all his time, and it was evident that he was in no hurry to begin his work; though when Stokes, who prided himself on the possession of a vein of caustic satire, remarked that he was not at all likely to make himself ill through over fatigue, he grew quite indignant, and declared that any idiot, who knew anything about art, knew that it was most necessary to study the best points of view before commencing a picture.

The diggers, however, at these remote camps, were always inclined to regard visitors from the dry diggings with suspicion, believing that they had changed their residences on account of motives which it would have been inconvenient to explain; and any statements as to their motives in coming, made by such errant gentry, were invariably taken at a heavy discount.

The sun was now sinking like a ball of fire beyond the red-ochre-coloured hills in the distance, throwing long golden rays of light over Gong-gong, tingeing with a roseate hue the white tents dotted about among the acacias, and dancing in a thousand golden spangles on the rippling water at the drift. From the claims men with pick and spade on shoulder were wending their ways towards their tents; the cradles were motionless on the river bank; and here and there thin white curls of smoke, clearly delineated against the evening sky, rose up from numerous newly-lighted camp

fires. From a little distance up the stream came down the sounds of laughter and voices, where some half-a-dozen diggers were splashing about in the river after the day's work, and the echo rolled back sharply from the hills on the opposite bank, startling the buck in the reeds above the rapids.

As Markwell approached, Italy stretched out his arms and yawned.

"They have fine sunsets in Italy," he said, "but they can't hold a candle to those in this country."

It was this perpetual reference to the atmospheric and scenic conditions of Italy which had earned for the artist his "sobriquet," to which he answered quite naturally, and of which he even seemed vain.

Markwell, who was not inclined to be rapturous about the beauties of Nature, grunted assent; and the two men, as if moved by a common impulse, entered the tent and walked towards the liquor-stained boards, set on trestles, which formed the bar.

The proprietor, clad in an exceedingly dirty shirt, appeared ruffled in demeanour; and, as they entered, was anathematising an exasperating tumbler, which had maliciously bumped against his elbow, and then destroyed itself by leaping on to the stony ground. His annoyance was not diminished by the first remark made by Italy, after the business preliminaries which had brought him and Markwell to the bar had been satisfactorily settled.

"So Cobb's got a young Malay girl come up to his place. She's to help at the bar, he tells me."

"So I hear," replied Randall curtly; while Markwell at once understood that the enigma which had a short time before defied solution, was now successfully solved.

"Is she worth looking at?" continued the artist.

"Worth looking at?" exclaimed Markwell. "Wouldn't any gal be worth looking at, when you haven't seen one for six months?"

Randall grinned sarcastically.

"Some men," he remarked, apparently to a cask of Cape Smoke which stood beside him, "are such fools, that directly they see a petticoat they're bound to run after it; even when they've had enough to make them know better. Some men don't seem to profit nothing by experience."

Markwell was silent, crushed by this facer, for it was generally known at Gong-gong that he had been taken in the springes

set by a skittish matron of unequivocal virtue at Durban; and that her husband had then rounded on him, and caused him to become involved in costly legal processes. It was even added that the proclivities of his better half had been well known to the injured husband; but that he had not availed himself of previous opportunities of obtaining a release, because of the want of pecuniary position on the part of the culprit; that Markwell had been in fact a scapegoat, and that the judicial proceedings in which he had taken part, had been the cause of his appearance at Gong-gong.

"Anyhow," continued Italy, steadfastly pursuing the original subject, "it's a deep move of Cobb's to bring up a barmaid to a one-horse place like this. It's public-spirited, sir. I esteem him for it, sir." And with this parting shaft, he turned and left the tent.

The sun was now down beyond the hills; the gold in the picture had reddened to crimson, and the crimson deepened to purple. Then the purple darkened; the light died out of the stream; the trees assumed a sombre aspect, the shadows deepened and deepened; lights began to appear in the camp, twinkling like so many feeble stars; and it became night.

The party of bathers came up from the river, laughing and talking, along the path which led past Randall's canteen. In the stillness of the night, their conversation was distinctly audible. They were discussing Cobb's new departure. They reached the door of Randall's bar, when a voice, which was at once recognised by the two men inside the tent as being the personal property of Stokes, was heard to say:

"Well, I s'pose we'll turn in here as usual."

"Oh, yes. Cer'nly — by-an'-by. I'm just going up to Cobb's first, to see what his Malay gal's like," replied a voice.

"So am I."

"And I."

"And me too," added the rest in chorus.

Randall broke out into an eruption of profanity behind his bottles at this unanimity of sentiment on the part of his most regular customers; while Stokes, who took a certain amount of interest in Randall's welfare, because they were old friends, and both citizens of the same town, was heard to say outside:

"You don't mean to say you're all going to chuck old man Randall over, at this time o' day — after all this time."

"Oh, no. We'll come back, you bet. We're just going to Cobb's out of curiosity, like. So'long, old man." And the crunching of their boots upon the pebbly path was heard passing the canteen, and dying away on the hill-side, along the road to the rival establishment.

Stokes entered the tent with a troubled expression of countenance.

"I'm afraid, old man," he said, "that this is going to be a bad business for you. None o' them chaps 'll come back. They're ashamed to say they ain't coming back; but you'll find they won't be ashamed to stay away."

Another eruption of profanity from the canteen-keeper was the only reply.

"Cussin' is all very well, in its way," continued Stokes meditatively. "It's a powerful relief to the mind; but I don't know that it ever helped a man out of a hole, by itself."

"Praps not," retorted the outraged Randall, "but as you allow it's a relief, p'raps you'll permit me to enjoy it."

And he again exploded in a fiery shower of strong language.

"But what are you going to do? That's the point now."

"Dunno—I'm sure."

"Lower the price of your drinks—under-sell Cobb," suggested Markwell.

"Ob, thank you very much. Cer'nly—that's the plan, of course. Stand free drinks to all you idle loafers in camp. Ob, yes—cer'nly," replied Randall with withering sarcasm.

"Bring up a gal, then, on your own account," continued the unabashed Markwell.

"Yes, that's your plan," put in Stokes. "A white one 'll settle Cobb's business easily."

A sudden inspiration seemed to strike the proprietor. He thumped the crazy counter with his fist, till the bottles and glasses jumped and jingled, and ejaculated:

"That's it. I'll send off to-morrow, home to Hopetown, for my sister."

"Your sister?" said Stokes, apparently surprised. "Why, I thought——"

His speech was suddenly cut short by a hideous grimace, which, simultaneously with a wink, was launched at him by his fellow-townsmen, who continued:

"Exactly so—as you say—my sister. Maria's a good deal like me. Good looks run in the family. She'll soon cut out that yaller gal of Cobb's." And he winked at Stokes, who burst into a fit of laughter.

CHRONICLES OF THE WELSH COUNTIES.

MONTGOMERY AND RADNOR.

FOR some miles to the eastward of the town of Montgomery, Offa's Dyke still forms the boundary between England and Wales, making a straight and even line as represented on county atlases, a line that has not varied a jot within the last thousand years. The town lies not far within the border, so that it was no very great achievement of the Norman knights to build a castle there on a fine rocky brow, and hold it against the Welsh. First of all, in the Conqueror's time, one Baldwin raised a fortress, probably only a stockaded enclosure, on the site of an earlier British stronghold, and hence the town; and the county long afterwards was known as Trefoldwyn. But Baldwin's town was wiped out of existence by the Welsh, and the later Castle of Roger de Montgomery shared the same fate. It was truly a Castle Perilous built and rebuilt, and again and again levelled and demolished by the men from the hills, who, surely, must have had good miners among them even then, although we hear nothing about them, so little did the Wild Welshmen make of worming their way into the Norman stronghold.

But it was not till Henry the Eighth's time that the county was formally constituted and named Montgomeryshire, from the little town on its borders—a name that gives an erroneous impression as of a district fairly settled under the Barons of that ilk; whereas, Montgomeryshire has always remained thoroughly Welsh, except as regards the debateable lands in the basin of the River Severn. To the Welsh it was part of Powys Land, the richest third of the divided realm of Roderick Mawr,

With shadowy forests, and with champaign rich'd
With plenteous rivers, and with wide-skirted meads.

In those days the Royal seat was at Pengwern, now Shrewsbury, and the whole of the country between the Severn and the Wye formed part of this rich and cultured Principality.

Reduced within the narrow bounds of the existing Counties of Montgomery and Radnor, the Princes of Powys fixed their seat at Mathraval, a pleasant spot in the valley of the River Vyrnwy, near the confluence of several mountain streams. Here, in old times, had probably been a Roman

station, and, later still, was built a Norman castle by Roger de Vipont. Rampart and deep fosse can still be traced, enclosing a space of several acres. The Norman castle was fiercely attacked by Llewellyn ap Iorwerth in the reign of King John, who himself brought an army to relieve it; and, judging the place to be untenable, destroyed the castle and retired.

Shorn of its dignity and possessions, the Principality of Powys became a simple Lordship, which remained in the descendants of its earlier Princes, till the main line of these ended in the reign of Edward the Second with an heiress, Haweis, whom the King married to a servant of his own, one John Charleton, a simple Knight of Salop. According to Welsh law Haweis was no heiress at all, and the family possessions should have been divided among her father's brothers; but here was seen both the wisdom of the old laws of Wales and the policy of King Edward the First in abrogating their provisions by his statutes of Rhyddlan. For it was by management of wardships and marriage of heiresses rather than by force of arms that the English Barons penetrated into Wales, and loosened and dislocated the old national bonds. In this case the power of the Crown was too strong for the Welsh claimants, and the King's valet entered into possession of the ancient possessions of the Princes of Powys.

Eventually the Lordship of Powys came, by purchase, into the family of the Herberts of Cherbury, one of whom was the noted Lord Herbert, who held the Castle of Montgomery at the time of the Civil Wars. Lord Herbert at first held for the King, but then declared for the Parliament, and admitted a Parliamentary garrison. There was a stout siege by the Royalists, and a vigorous defence; and then Sir Thomas Middleton advanced from Oswestry to relieve the garrison, and a desperate battle was fought within sight of the towers of Montgomery, in which at last victory declared for the side of the Parliament.

The town of Montgomery itself was once strongly fortified with walls, and gates, and towers; but these were in ruins in the sixteenth century, when Leland visited the place, and are now only to be traced here and there in isolated fragments.

On the way to Newtown, along the valley of the Severn, Glen Hafren, according to the Welsh tongue, are the remains of an old Welsh tower known as

Castell Dolforwyn, connected with a legend that goes far back into antiquity, and that Milton has consecrated by his genius. The story is told in the chronicles of Jeffrey of Monmouth, which embody a number of quaint and marvellous legends, which, if not history, are in many respects better than history, and vastly more entertaining. At all events, they were good enough history for the great spirits of the Elizabethan age.

According to Jeffrey, then, in the days of Lochrine, "that had the sceptre from his father Brute"—the glorious sceptre, that is, of Ancient Briton, the land was invaded by a swarm of Huns, under their King, called Humber. These King Lochrine met in battle, and overthrew them, their leader, Humber, being drowned in the river that now bears his name. Lochrine found treasures of gold and silver in the ships of the slaughtered Huns, and, more precious still, three young ladies of wonderful beauty, captives of the barbarous horde, one of the maidens, by name Estrildis, being the daughter of a King in Germany, about whose beauties the old chronicler waxes eloquent. Forthwith King Lochrine was lost in love for the fair Estrildis. But he had already an affianced bride, dark Gwendolen, the daughter of a powerful chieftain; and fearing his vengeance should he play the daughter false, he concealed his love, and in effect the lady too, hiding her away in an underground bower for seven long years, during which time Estrildis gave birth to a most beautiful daughter, Sabra. In course of time dark Gwendolen discovered her husband's treachery, and, mustering her people, she overthrew him and put him to death, and carried out her vengeance by throwing Estrildis and Sabra into a river, where they were drowned.

Thus far the chronicler; and here Milton takes up the legend in "Comus":

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn
stream,
Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure.

The guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enraged step-dame, Gwendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
That staid her flight with his cross-flowing course.

And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made goddess of the river; still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds among the twilight meadows.

The scene of all this is no doubt Dalforwyn, the Maiden's Mead, where the river

flows softly along in a green and cultured valley,

Crowned
With many a tower and terrace round.

Altogether different is the scene when Newtown is reached: quite a busy manufacturing place, where Welsh tweeds and Welsh flannels claim pre-eminence. At Newtown Hall, close by, flourished, in the course of the last century, a most whimsical specimen of the long-descended landed gentry of Wales. This was Sir John Pryce, of so very ancient a family in that part of Wales as to justify the boast of ancestry expressed in his motto:

Avi numerantur Avorum.

Sir John's heart was so great and loving that, like Charlemagne, he would not abandon his loved ones even to the grave. He had the bodies of two successive wives embalmed, and kept them constantly by his side, till he married a third wife, most tenderly loved of all, who persuaded him to consign her predecessors to the family vault.

The third wife died in her turn; but to Sir John the legends and myths of old were so many realities. He did not despair of seeing her brought back to him, "like Alcestis from the grave;" and, hearing of one Bridget Bostock, in Cheshire, who was performing wonderful feats of healing, he wrote to her to suggest that by her extraordinary gifts, she might also succeed in raising the dead to life.

In that case, he suggested the late Dame Eleanor Pryce as a subject for her powers. The poor man had forgotten the other two wives, who had surely a prior claim. His Ayesha had been everything to him, and the ancient Kadijah was forgotten.

But alas! Ayesha was forgotten in her turn, for, although he abandoned Newtown Hall, unable to endure the recollections of her, whom he had lost, suggested by the familiar scenes, yet, in his new place of residence, and at an advanced age, he fell violently in love with "a young lady, the reigning toast of that day, then in the bloom of youth and beauty."

Every night he would visit the mansion of his beloved to watch the light in her chamber window, "frequently introducing through the keyhole or under the door some love song; for, to a fine taste for music, he united no contemptible talent for poetry."

Finally, on his death-bed, it was found that he had bequeathed all his fortune

away from his own family to this young lady, who, however, "nobly resigned her right to his heir."

Higher up the Severn, above Newtown, almost enclosed by a fold of the river, lies Caersws, where excavations have discovered many traces of Roman occupation. Coins, tiles, red Samian ware, pottery of all kinds, drains, and the foundations of villas have rewarded the diligence of explorers, and leave no doubt that here was once a somewhat important centre of Roman occupation. Over the hills on either side are traces of a Roman way, which is known in the district as Sarn Susan, Susan having been, according to popular tradition, a famous Queen of old times, who, like Boadicea, led her people against some invader. It is curious that in Wales the Roman roads generally bear feminine titles. There is Sarn Helen, for instance, which appears in various parts of the Principality, and which is generally attributed to Helena, the mother of Constantine, and the discoverer of the Holy Cross. But who Susan might have been, it is hard to say.

Above Llanidloes the Severn becomes but an insignificant stream, as Plinlimmon appears, with its five summits, massive in bulk, but far from grand and impressive in outline. It is a great mother of rivers, however; the Wye and the Severn both rise in its sides, their sources not far from each other; the rivers that meet after their long and varied courses through some of the fairest and richest scenes in England.

Hill and dale, stream and waterfall, with quiet, secluded hamlets and scattered farm-houses, diversify the way from Newtown to Machynlleth. But the hills are mostly grassy to their summit, and, if rather tame in outline, afford pasture to flocks and herds, and to droves of the famous ponies once so cheap, but which are now esteemed according to their worth.

Nothing seems to have happened at Machynlleth since Leland visited it. Of course the Parliament of Owen Glendwr and his proclamation as Prince of Wales at Market Cross were before Leland's time. The place was not badly chosen for such a purpose, as it affords a meeting-place between the men of North Wales and the South, and news and intelligence would circulate in both directions; for the River Dovey, which runs past the town, is one of the boundaries of North Wales—not that the country on this side of the river is South Wales, as far as Montgomery is

concerned. The men of Powys still retain a certain characteristic of their own, and would not be gratified to be called South Walians; a barbarous term, by the way, which still holds current among the English-speaking Welsh.

Five-and-twenty years ago, before the Cambrian Coast Railway was completed, there was a capital four-horse coach which ran from Machynlleth to Barmouth, which was driven by Colonel Corbet, an enthusiastic amateur coachman. And this made the little place and its name, generally mispronounced by English tongues, familiar to the tourists and travellers of those days.

On the subject of pronunciation, by the way, what a good example was set by old Leland, who wrote the Welsh names according to the English alphabet, which differs so much in the value of the letters from the Welsh! Mahencliff, for instance, as he writes the name of the town in question, if pronounced as spelt, would be understood by any Welshman.

When we reach the Berwyn Mountains, which take up the boundary line of North Wales and Powys, we are among the sources of the Vyrnwy and its many tributary rills, whose united waters form a bounteous feeder to the Severn, recalling Milton's invocation to the latter river:

May thy brimmed waves for this
Their full tribute never miss,
From a thousand petty rills
That tumble down the snowy hills.

Milton, however, did not reckon on the vast increase of the great commercial cities of Lancashire, and the petty rills are many of them now impounded to form the great reservoirs of the Liverpool water-works — immense works which might be the wonder of any age. A whole village, church and all, now lies deep beneath the waves of one of these artificial lakes, and the waters are to be carried over hill and dale by Oswestry and Malspas, and so to Liverpool, to slake the thirst and fill the kettles of those who dwell by the Mersey.

The mines of Montgomery have been worked from a very early period. There are traces of Roman workings for copper, it is said, among the hills about Llanymynach, on the borders of Shropshire, and in a large cave or excavation called the Ogo, in the same neighbourhood, about a hundred years ago, a number of skeletons were discovered, with coins of the time of Antoninus Pius, and ancient mining implements. Lead mining, too, has been carried on from

time immemorial, and the limestone hills have been carved and quarried in all directions, both for ancient buildings and for modern purposes.

The Breiddin Hills, which rise above Welshpool, are a curious detached group of the Silurian range, crowned with a column commemorating Admiral Rodney and his victories, and also noted for a fine British camp, which is said to have been the scene of the last stand of Caractacus against the Roman power. Another last stand was made on the summit of the Long Mountain, justly so named, with its long, forbidding outline; the last stand, that is, of the independent chiefs of Wales under Madoc, a natural son of the last native Prince. Another battle-ground in which England, rather than Wales, had the chief interest, is to be found at Buttington on the borders of Salop.

It was in the year 893 that Haesten, the Danish chief, came with eighty ships into the Thames mouth and made a bold foray across the country by a route which might be found a pleasant one at the present day — up the Thames that is and across to the Severn, and then up the Severn to the borders of Wales. Alfred was then fighting at Exeter; but the Saxon aldermen gathered all the fighting men from every town east of the Parret, and west and east of Selwood, and north of Thames, and west of Severn, and also some parts of the North Welsh race. And these encompassed the Danes in their camp at Buttington, and kept them without food, so that they were compelled to eat their horses. And then the Danes sallied out, and there was a great fight and many were killed, but more cut their way through the force of Saxons and got back in the best way they could to the marshes of Essex.

When we come to Radnorshire, we find but meagre materials for its chronicles.

There is neither a park nor a deer
To be seen in all Radnorshire,
Nor a man with five hundred a year,
Save Fowler of Abbey Cwm Hir.

This Fowler was one Sir William, a Knight, who was alive in 1680, but who would not have been deemed a remarkable character in a county of greater pretensions.

As New Radnor was only new in the days of King Harold, who is said to have founded the place, it would seem to follow that Old Radnor must be very old indeed. And though New Radnor was once a chartered town, with walls and towers

about it, the place has never flourished since the days of Owen Glendwr, who destroyed the town and its fortifications, as far as he was able.

At Radnor, long before, Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury began his pilgrimage through Wales to preach the Crusade, in the reign of Henry the Second. Giraldus, the Archdeacon of St. David's, accompanied him, and reports how they there met Rhys, son of Griffith, Prince of North Wales, with his son-in-law Einion. The Archbishop preached a sermon, which Giraldus translated into Welsh.

Bishops, Monks, all the ecclesiastics who were present, took the Cross with enthusiasm, to encourage the rest; and the young Prince was so stirred, that he modestly asked leave of his father-in-law that he might hasten to revenge the injury done to the Great Father.

Rhys himself made up his mind to go to the Holy Land, and for fifteen days was busy making preparations for the journey; at the end of which time the influence of his wife prevailed, and he determined to stop at home.

And then Giraldus relates a story of an apocryphal character, of how, once upon a time, the Lord of the Castle of Radnor, benighted while hunting, passed the night, with his hounds, in a neighbouring church, unmindful of the sacred character of the building. In the morning the dogs were all mad, and the Lord of Radnor found himself struck blind. He was conveyed, at his own request, to Jerusalem, and led into the thick of the fight, and closed his life with honour.

About Radnor we have Radnor Forest, a wild and sterile tract of country lying at considerable elevation. Indeed, the whole county is marked by a wildness which is rather monotonous in colouring, barren rather than picturesque. As usual, the monks found out the pleasantest clearing, perhaps they helped to make it so, for the benefit of the future Fowler. Abbey Cwmhir, or Come Here, as Leland writes it in his admirable phonographic system, was originally, as he says, "an Abbey of White Monks," of Cistercians, that is, who were brought here in the twelfth century, by one Prince Cadwallon. Although of foreign origin, the Monks seem to have become true Welshmen before long, and one of the Monks adroitly led the invading English into an ambuscade, in which they suffered severely. This was in King Henry the Second's time, and the wrath-

ful King threatened to destroy the Abbey in consequence, but spared it on payment of a fine of three hundred marks. But the Monks becoming more English in sympathies as ages rolled on, the Abbey was burnt and wasted by Owen Glendwr, and was little better than a ruin when finally dismantled by Henry the Eighth's Commissioners; and now there are only foundations to be seen.

Then we have Knighton, with Offa's Dyke passing right through the little town, and Cnwclas and Ralph Mortimer's old castle close by. Presteign, too, a clean and neat county town, with its gaol and court-house, and the Judge's lodgings, and the Warden Hill laid out in pleasant walks, and Rhayadr, so called from a waterfall close by, but which, possibly, by corruption, may have given its name to Radnor. If not, it is difficult to say where the name comes from.

There is no overpowering interest, indeed, anywhere in Radnorshire; but Aberdwy deserves mention—the last retreat of the last Welsh Prince. Here he was nearly surrounded by his English enemies under Mortimer and Gifford, and escaped to Builth through the snow, having had his horse's shoes reversed to deceive the enemy. But the treacherous smith who had done the work—red-haired Madoc—betrayed his movements to the English, and the garrison of his own Castle of Builth refused to admit the Prince, fearing the vengeance of the English force. Drawing up his few remaining followers along the banks of the River Irvon, a desultory skirmish ensued, in the course of which, Llewellyn, who had not put on his armour, was surprised by an English spearman, and thrust through the body. His grave is near where he fell, some three miles north of Builth.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilotees," &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE was one thing the polite Behrens would not do even to oblige his friend—he would not drink hot whisky and water at half-past eleven o'clock at night; and so Uncle Bob, who loved not to be alone, was obliged to sip his grog in the company of his little lass.

Tilly did not mind in the least; had she

not herself, every Sunday night, mixed the modest potion wherewith Cousin Spencer solaced himself after the severe labours of the day! Life was set to old fashions in Lilliesmuir, and an invitation to a hand at whist, and a "rummer," with mince-collops and hot potatoes for supper, was still considered a genteel entertainment, and one to which the minister himself might be safely invited on any evening except Saturday. To these, the customs of his youth, Uncle Bob had come back as if he had never forsaken them, and probably in his wandering life had seen none that were better; so he took his tumbler in all innocence of heart, and Tilly was glad to have his company on any pretext, for the events of the day had been quite tremendous, and demanded discussion.

The discussion was not to begin with her uncle, however; he seemed, indeed, to hold himself purposely aloof from it, and to ward it off by many clumsy feints—admiring her friend; discussing the boarding-house and Madame Drave; and quoting Mr. Behrens.

"I wanted him to come up again, but he wouldn't. 'Can't stand your sort of night-caps,' he said, and yet he drinks that sour German stuff that would set any Christian's teeth on edge."

"Perhaps he thought we might wish to talk," said Tilly, adroitly approaching the burning subject, "and we do, don't we, dear? We want to tell each other that we are glad."

"I don't know about glad," he said moodily; "there's nothing to be glad of or proud of where a Temple's concerned, if that's what you would be at."

"Does it hurt you to speak of the past?" she asked gently.

She was curious, as any girl would be; she had heard so little of her relations. Cousin Spencer was not a person of whom one could ask many questions; and as for 'Lisbeth, what she knew she kept grimly to herself. 'Lisbeth governed on the principle of proverbial philosophy, and one of her maxims was that "bairns should be seen and not heard;" therefore, Tilly's enquiries were not encouraged. Even Uncle Bob, who spoiled and petted her to a shameful degree, was always strangely reticent on this one topic; so beyond the meagre fact that she had cousins who lived in London, she knew nothing.

And now that one of the cousins had been found—so strangely found—was she still to know nothing? She suffered a

momentary pang of disappointment; but she could not be curious to the point of wounding her uncle.

"We'll talk of something else," she said, pushing a little stool to his side, and seating herself on it, careless of her pretty blue draperies.

"No, no," he cleared his throat with a resolute sound, as he laid his hand on her head. "We'll not shirk it, my dear; we'll talk of it this once, and then it'll be the past for you as well as for me, and we'll let it lie buried."

He looked a while straight before him, and then he said, "You've seen the old farm at home—the old house, where your father, and your father's father, and you yourself, my lass, were born?"

"To be sure," said Tilly, "I know it by heart—the loft where you and my father slept as boys; the parlour with the box-beds shut in by big doors; the old pear-tree on the south wall; the bough-tree in the garden; I know it all. Mrs. Glennie used to ask me to go and spend days. Uncle," she broke off, forgetting her first anxiety in a second, "I wish you would buy the High Farm some day, and let us go and live there in summer-time."

"No, no." He met this proposition coldly. "We've done with all that, my lass. You're a lady now, and you must live as ladies do. In the old days, when we were all at the High Farm—your father, and Jessie, and me, and the old folks—before I went out into the world, it was Jessie that was to be the lady. She was a bonnie lass; no bonnier or higher-spirited in all the countryside; and to see her with her brown eyes, and her light hair, and her trim waist, and the hands she kept so white in spite of the farm-work, you would have thought her good enough for a Duke. You mind me of her sometimes, my pretty, not in your looks but in your ways, and when you sing, for she had a voice like a lintie—whiles I think, I hear her yet."

He paused, and began again with a sigh.

"She had lads enough coming after her, as every bonnie lass with or without a tocher has; but there was only one she favoured, and he was a bit laird on the other side of the country. He was a dour, hard-favoured man; but there was nothing against him, and Jessie thought she was taking a fine step up in the world when she plighted herself to him. It was within a month of the wedding, they were to be cried on the next Sunday, and she had got her plenishing. Bourhill was redding up the

house for her, when a young London spark came down to be clerk at old McQueen's Bank in the High Street. He seemed a very grand gentleman to us, with our plain country ways, and we thought it mighty condescending of him when he came to see us at the Farm. He said he liked to come, and the old folks were pleased to see him, and took it as a compliment when he dropped in to supper. I mind Bourhill looked dour when he rode over, and found him at the farm, but he was always a down-looking chap. Well, well, I'm spinning a long yarn. May be I'm a coward after all, my bairn, and keep sheering away from the trouble; and so, to make a short story of an ugly business, I'll just tell you in three words. When Jessie's wedding morning came round, and the lads had set the bells ringing, and Bourhill was riding over on his white mare to the High Farm in his Sunday suit, with a flower in his button-hole, there was no Jessie to be found. Her bed had never been lain in. It was summer-time, when the nights are long, and there is no dark to speak of. She was miles and miles away before we knew that she had gone. It was hardly an hour from the time we missed her—the one bit of news came slap on the back of the other—when we heard that McQueen's bank had been robbed the night before. It was market-day, and the bank had been brisk and busy with the farmers coming in—a clever day for a thief to choose—

"And"—murmured Tilly.

"Ay, ay; we didn't need to be told the villain's name—the black-hearted scoundrel!—nor to guess in whose company he had sneaked off with his ill-gotten gains."

"She didn't know!" said Tilly, with conviction.

"She knew she was Bourhill's promised wife—Bourhill, who had stooped to her, and who cursed her on what was to have been their wedding day."

"Oh," said Tilly with a shiver. "You didn't, Uncle Bob!"

"Oh, my dear, not that; not quite so bad as that. But I never saw her again."

"Never again!"

"It was her wish." His face took a hard look. "Your father and I followed them; but she would not see us. She sent us her wedding-ring to look at, with their letters inside; she would hear no word, she said, against the man she had married—the only man she had ever loved. That was all the cold comfort we could

bring back to her kith and kin at home. She was tied fast enough for life—our Jessie to a thief!"

Even after all these years his face burned, and his pulses throbbed with the old scorching anger, the old shamed, dishonoured pride.

"For the sake of our name—the honest Burton name that had never had stain on it—the Bank consented not to prosecute, and we paid back the money. It crippled your father, and kept him a poor man all the days he lived; and it sent me out into the world to work for my bread. It didn't make him the less a thief and a scoundrel, but it silenced the neighbours' tongues."

"And did she never come back?" said Tilly, her heart stirred over the pitiful story. "Oh, what lonely, solitary days she must have had!"

"Ay, lonely enough, no doubt, but she never came back. She had pride enough in her to keep her away."

"And her husband—surely he repented, amended."

"He went from bad to worse. He went as low as a man can go. Don't you ever ask any more about him, my pretty. It's not for a young lass like you to hear what such a man may become. He's in his grave these fifteen years and more, and Heaven above is his Judge."

Tilly sat silent for a long time, her head resting on his knee.

"Oh, poor wife, poor wife!" she said at last; "what days and nights of bitterness she must have passed! What an anguish of sorrow she must have undergone when she found out what he really was—this man for whom she had given up everything! Uncle Bob, did no one—no one from the old home ever see her again?"

He did not seem to hear her. He was reliving those days of shame.

"Once, when I was out west," he said, "a preaching chap came to our shanty. Preaching and praying weren't much in our line; but the place was mortally lonesome and a new face was a godsend, so my mates and me let the chap have his say. It was all about forgiveness—I mind his words to this day—Forgive your enemies; forgive your brother till seventy times seven. When he had done, and he had to shut up pretty quick, I took him on one side.

"'Look here, parson,' said I, 'it's all very fine your talking, but supposing you've got a prodigal in your family who's

run up a higher score than that and doesn't want to be forgiven once, let alone seventy times, what then ?

"He looked at me kind o' hard and straight. 'The direction's plain,' said he, 'you've got to forgive him all the same.'

"Now I didn't see the sense of that ; seemed a kind o' waste chucking away all that forgiveness on a man that didn't want it, for John Temple didn't care a snap of the finger whether I blessed him or cursed him, and I says to him : 'Parson, you better clear out before our men get riled.' But at night when I lay awake under the blankets, I thought to myself there might be something in forgiving Jessie. And I thought I would look her up. I had made a trifle out there, and I was going home—the first time in seven years—to have a look at the old place. It took me a week or two to track him," he continued brokenly, "here in London, for he didn't care to make too free of his address, and kept it dark, unless when he wanted money, but when I found him at last—she was dead."

"But you saw him and his children ?" said Tilly, at last breaking the silence that had fallen between them.

"I saw him and his brats, and I didn't feel that I wanted to forgive him any more than I had done before. As for Jessie, it was too late, or maybe, who knows, too early ?"

"But his son—this other John Temple—he is good ; I feel sure he is good."

"Well, well, it's not for me to judge ; but he comes of an ill stock, and what's bred in the bone will out in the flesh, or I'm mistaken. But I'm willing he should start fair if he'll let the past be. I'm willing to give him a chance."

"You are bound to do it," said Tilly, strongly. "It is his sorrow to have had a father he could neither love nor respect ; but there is no shame to him."

"Well," he drew a long breath, "he can come in and out and take what's going, as I told him ; but one thing I'm determined on, he'll never touch a penny of mine while I live or when I die."

"I'm sure he would never want to !" said Tilly, more lightly, glad to divert her uncle's thoughts. "I know him better than you, and there's one thing he takes from the Burtons, and that's their pride."

"And what about the other new chum ?" he said, reverting to his Australian slang ; "the surgeon's son"—he smiled down on her.

"Oh, he !" she lifted her chin rather disdainfully. "He is vain and conceited ; that's the form his pride takes. He is vain of his nice little moustache and his straight eyebrows, and his white hands, and he knows that a crimson tie is very becoming."

"It's easy to see where your eyes have been, my woman !" cried her uncle, finding relief from his oppression in laughter.

"Oh, no," said Miss Tilly, rising quickly and blushing very prettily, "not at all. My eyes were everywhere. I could tell you everything about Mr. Paul Behrens too, and my cousin John ; and as for you, sir, do you think I did not notice that you had only changed your coat ? Do you think because you looked all right while you were sitting that I don't know what a sham you were ? Oh, you lazy old man ! And you think that I have no eyes, do you, and because I smile that I am not very angry with you all the time ?"

But Uncle Bob was not to be brow-beaten or cajoled out of his pleasantries.

"So he's conceited ? I'll tell him that," he murmured. "So he knows that a red tie suits his complexion. I'll tell him that, too. It'll do the young spark good."

Tilly looked calmly at him for a moment.

"Oh, tell him if you like," she said. "You are quite welcome, but you can't do it to-night. It is long past midnight, and if you are not going to bed, I am."

Then she went close to him and put her arms about him with a warm hug that meant love, and sympathy, and many other things.

"Do it if you dare !" she whispered menacingly, and with that she left him.

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BOOK VI.

CHAPTER II. "DECEIVED!"

THE room was empty again—it had been empty for a long time—and yet Alexis Kenyon did not seem to realise the fact.

She had dismissed Bari with that proud guard still on her face and voice which left him utterly in the dark as to how she had taken his information. She was far too much a woman of the world to pretend to any false delicacy. The history of this German girl was only to her a history like many others—folly, sin, betrayal. Her fate did not waken one throb of pity, one thought of compassion; far otherwise, it raised a fierce and savage joy in her breast. It seemed as the sweetness of a revenge which she would long to take for an indignity, an insult, the like of which had never approached her serene and haughty life.

"And I believed in him," she said to herself. "I thought, for once, that I had found truth, honour, single-heartedness; and, after all, he is no greater, no better than any of the fools, who run after a girl's face and allow themselves to be the slaves of their passions."

Her own face grew dark and stormy; her lips set themselves in one hard line; a sudden flame of rage caught her soul, and melted all the icy coldness and indifference on which she had so prided herself—melted it as snow before fire. Her brow flushed, her bosom heaved, the slender stem of the screen in her hand snapped, and shattered, and fell in a score of fragments at her

feet. She to be duped, and tricked, and deceived! She, who had so prided herself on her clear-sightedness, her unerring judgement! She who had cheated her heart with the fancy that this man loved her, and who now, in the very hour of her triumph, learnt that he had all the time been prosecuting a disgraceful amour!

As each moment passed, the bitterness of her shame and the jealous fury of her anger deepened and increased.

For it was jealousy which touched her with its brand of fire—jealousy which for the first time in her life of selfish caprice, dragged her from her high pedestal, and held her bound by the common fetters of common lives.

She was no wiser, no surer, no better treated than any groom's wife or village girl among her own people. She had been so certain that he cared for her—so certain—and now——!

Her fierce Russian blood boiled in her veins and flushed her cheek. She remembered the intercourse of those past months, and every word he had spoken seemed to stand out in letters of flame, and condemn him as base, ignoble, hypocritical; all that she most hated, all that she could least excuse. He had deceived her, even her! Her pride reeled and fell into the dust of secret shame as she confessed it; and as she thought of her own blindness; of the miserable intrigue carried on so skilfully; of a rival, whom her inmost soul despised; of the guilt and horror now heaped upon his life and of him, whom she had once told herself was as a king among men—a man worthy to be loved and trusted with all that was worthiest and best in the heart which he might win.

The pain and the insult maddened her;

yet she sat on there still as any statue, but humiliated as a queen dethroned, a lovely figure, and yet a most miserable one.

She sat on without heed of time; when her maid knocked to ask if she would dress for dinner, she answered impatiently that she had a headache, and would not come down; that she wished to be undisturbed; and her moods were too well known in the household for anyone to venture near her until she should herself summon them.

An hour passed—two hours—three hours—yet she did not move. As the third struck, a faint and timid knock aroused her. She answered it impatiently, almost fiercely. It was her maid again, with a message.

Hearing it through the closed door, she was told that Mr. Lyle was below, and wished to know if he could see her for a few moments on business of the greatest importance.

The girl started to her feet, too amazed and indignant for speech:

"He wished to see Sir Roy," continued the maid; "but he had gone out on hearing that you would not be downstairs that evening. Mr. Lyle, therefore, begged me to ask you to grant him this interview. He would not have asked it, had it not been necessary and of the deepest importance."

Alexis stood there, her hand pressed to her heart, whose wild throbs almost hurt her; her eyes dilated with anger; a fierce, incredulous joy thrilling her veins.

That he should ask for her, seek her presence voluntarily, seemed a thing so strange that she could scarcely credit it. A moment—then she unlocked the door, and bade the maid attend to her fire and alter the shade of the lamp, while she herself swept into the adjoining dressing-room and looked at herself from head to foot with the merciless scrutiny that once before had characterised her personal survey.

All the tumultuous feelings of the past hours had added to, rather than detracted from, her strange beauty. The flush on her cheeks, the feverish brilliance of her eyes, the loosely ruffled hair on her brow, only made her lovelier for the warmth and richness of colouring they lent her usual statue-like calm. She took a deep yellow rose from a vase near at hand, and placed it amidst the laces at her breast, and gave one glance at the graceful, sweeping folds that fell around her like an opal cloud. Then she passed on and entered her boudoir again, calm and proud as a young

queen who gives audience to an erring subject.

"You may bring Mr. Lyle here," she said coldly, and seated herself in the long low chair, to all appearance as calm and indifferent as ever. Her eyes fell on the broken fragments of the screen which she had held, and with a sudden sense of previous disadvantage, she took another from the carved mantel-shelf and laid it on her lap.

"Why does he come?" she asked herself, and the rose in her bosom trembled with its rapid pulsations. "Why? Is it to defend himself? Does he think to fool me again?"

"Mr. Lyle," announced the maid.

Alexis looked up as the door closed on her visitor. What he saw in her face she did not know; but the hand which he had half-extended dropped at his side, and he simply bowed in answer to her cold greeting.

"I am sorry," he said, "to intrude upon you, Miss Kenyon, but the matter is urgent, and Sir Roy is from home. I cannot wait for his return, as I leave here in an hour."

"Indeed," she said curtly. "And what is the urgent matter, Mr. Lyle?"

The blood flushed his pale cheek with momentary warmth. Only now, when he looked on that proud face, when he heard that calm and chilling voice did he realise how difficult his task might be.

"Miss Kenyon," he said hesitatingly, "you told me, on the last occasion of our meeting, that you were engaged to be married to your cousin, Neale. You must have seen that the information affected me strangely."

She slowly opened the screen, and began to wave it to and fro with languid and indifferent grace. That momentary hesitation, that look from his haggard eyes, thrilled her heart anew. Was she to have her triumph, after all?

Seeing that she did not answer, he resumed: "I was affected, indeed—more than that. I received a painful shock at that announcement, for I knew that your cousin must have wantonly deceived you, or that he stood condemned in the sight of all honourable men as a dishonoured scoundrel!"

"My cousin is not here to defend himself," she said coolly, "and I am not accustomed to such very violent language. Perhaps you will give me the reasons for your—abuse?"

"The reasons," he said impetuously,

"are these. When I met him in Venice, he represented himself to me as a married man. When I met him here—months afterwards—he again repeated that statement. I had the honour of knowing the young lady, whom he represented as his wife. To know her was to know and admire purity and beauty of nature and person, in its highest and most perfect form. I did not doubt his word or his honour, and he gave me excellent reasons for his keeping the marriage secret. You may understand, therefore, how amazed I was, when I heard from your own lips that he was engaged to you, and that you were contemplating a speedy union."

He looked at her intently. The screen lay idly in her lap. Her face was calm and unmoved as ever. She languidly adjusted a cushion, and leant back with indolent grace, while her eyes looked up to his with a cynical coldness and disbelief which startled him more even than her words.

"Are you telling me a romance?" she said. "I assure you that it does not interest me at all. I am quite aware of my cousin's little idyl. It is only on a par with all other follies of manly youth. But you, surely, are not so credulous as to believe your version of the tale, or suppose that my cousin would dare to offer me such an insult as your words imply?"

"Do you mean to say," cried Adrian Lyle hoarsely, "that you don't believe what I have told you—that you doubt my word?"

"I mean to say," she answered, quite unmoved, "that I never listen to tales behind any one's back. I am quite aware of this—person's—existence. I am aware also of the part which she has played in my cousin's life and in yours. But the story of the pretended marriage is a piece of folly which I never expected to hear from you; and I marvel not only at your want of good taste in repeating such a story to me, but at your pretence of crediting it yourself."

The words were so contemptuous, so unwomanly, that, as he listened to them, Adrian Lyle felt the very blood tingle in his veins. A dark flush rose to his brow; his eyes flashed back to hers the deepest scorn that ever any man's eyes had dared to give her.

"Miss Kenyon," he said—and there was a ring of power and command in his voice which held her even against her will—"you have offered me the deepest insult that one human being can offer to another. Were

your cousin here at this moment, he would not dare to deny what I have said."

"He is not here," interposed Alexis coolly. "And you have it all your own way, Mr. Lyle. He will soon be back, however, and able to defend himself. I leave it to your own good taste to refrain from further particulars of this not very creditable romance. It has neither interest nor amusement for me, I assure you."

Her eyes met his own with a challenge of defiance. He knew then that all his faith, his honesty, his courage, were impotent to move her, to win her belief, to waken her sympathy; and he felt a fierce anger at himself for having come to her with a tale, at which she only mocked and jeered; with the pathetic story of that broken life which could never interpose itself now between her and the cold caprice that had been its ruin.

Then suddenly his face grew warm. A burning light leaped into his eyes. He crossed the space and stood before her, majestic as an avenging angel, holding her cold and selfish pride checked and silent by the might and strength of conscious truth.

"As truly as there is a Heaven above us," he said solemnly, "you shall hear soon, whether you affect to disbelieve or not, that what I have told you is true—every word of it. Neale Kenyon won this child away from her home by specious promises, all of which he has broken. How could she tell she was deceived? A girl of sixteen, as ignorant of the world and of men as a baby. He has sworn to me that she was his wife. She never doubted it herself—never till the day that brought his letter to you. When I heard what that letter contained, and you confirmed it, I went to her. I found her despairing, heart-broken, all the youth and faith and glory of her life shattered at one cowardly blow—a sight to wring any man's heart, to soften any woman's. I could do nothing. Consolation was not to be found for a calamity so overwhelming—a calamity which her youth and innocence made ten times more pathetic. Long, long ago I promised to be her friend, if ever she should need one; but what could any friend do for her in such an hour of agony? Maddened with despair and grief she has fled from the only home she knew—the home which your cousin provided for his wife, and where she has lived under that name ever since he left for India. I have lost all trace of her. It is three days

since she left her shelter. In her distraught and broken-hearted state, Heaven alone knows what may not be her fate ere now. Then I took the desperate resolve of appealing to you, for as she knows your name, and knows that you are to be Neale Kenyon's wife, it may be that she will find her way here. In any case, you know now the character of the man you are about to wed, and, whether you defy the better impulses of your nature or not, you can no longer accept him in ignorance. I have sworn to befriend this girl at any cost; and if her fate demands it, the world shall know Neale Kenyon's villainy as I know it. Will you at your own risk and peril give your good name into his keeping?"

She sat there quite still and silent beneath the breathless torrent of those passionate words.

As they ceased she slowly rose and confronted him:

"You have told me your version of this story," she said, "now listen to mine. Is it only friendship that has made you so keen a champion of this interesting heroine? Have you indeed played so blameless a part with regard to her and her 'unprotected' condition? What of your own visits to her? Your mysterious absence and illness, when she played the part of ministering angel? What of the rumour which credits you with being the 'Mr. Kenyon' whose personality you are kind enough to foist on to my cousin's shoulders? There are two sides to every tale; I cannot give the verdict to either as yet; but——"

She stopped. The disgust and horror of his face stayed further insults, though she was then in the mood to heap one on another unsparingly.

"I don't know," he said hoarsely, "how you can bring yourself, as a woman, to insinuate facts so disgraceful. They are below contempt. I should scorn myself, did I attempt to answer them or defend one single action which you have so grossly misinterpreted. I see now whom I have to thank for being beforehand with me. Your spy has acquitted himself most creditably, and I congratulate you on having kept his services in the family. Further discussion is needless, I see. Your sex has given you the privilege of insinuating what no man would have dared to do."

A faint smile curved her lips.

"You can be melodramatic out of the pulpit as well as in," she said. "It is a

great art, but you had better reserve its uses for my cousin. It will be interesting to know what he has to say on the matter; and excuse my remarking that it would have been better taste to have kept the subject for his ears, or—my father's."

She bowed coldly as a sign of dismissal.

"You have wilfully misconstrued my motives," he said. "Before I go, will you tell me if you believe that I have spoken the truth of this matter? Leaving future intentions out of the question, I have a right to demand that."

Her eyes dilated. There was the vibration of intense passion, subdued and held in check, but dangerous withal, in her clear, low voice, as she answered:

"If you swore it on the Faith and Order you profess, I would not believe you! A priest is but a man when he loves, and you must think me very blind that I have not discovered your secret ere this."

His face paled to the hues of death. For a moment his heart seemed to stop beating, and he turned sick and dizzy with the overmastering power of long-restrained emotion.

Then he looked at her with one last look of horror and disgust, and left her presence without another word.

She, left alone, listened to the echo of his steps with a strange, feverish delight. "I have hurt him," she cried to herself in a savage, breathless way. "It was all I could do—all I could do. Oh, how I hate that girl! To think that I have let myself be so blind, so deluded, and that all the time it was for her he cared—for her! never for me, never one single moment of his life for me!"

Then she sank down slowly on the soft white furs at her feet, and hid her face in her hands in a sudden, torturing humiliation which filled her soul with horror, the like of which had never yet touched her brilliant, capricious life!

Adrian Lyle had his revenge then, little as he guessed or desired it.

SOUTH AFRICAN SKETCHES.

AN IDYL OF GONG-GONG.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

ABOUT ten days afterwards, as Markwell was working in his claim, assisting his Kaffirs to move a large rock upon which they had just hit, he felt something strike

him on the back, and a pebble dropped beside him. He looked up hastily and saw Stokes standing at the edge of the pit, regarding him with an amused expression.

"Curse your fooling," he exclaimed, "throwing stones like that. Are you drunk already?"

"She's come," replied Stokes, overlooking the imputation thus thrown upon his character.

"Who's come?"

"Maria's come."

"No!" exclaimed Markwell incredulously. "Randall's sister's come?"

"That's so, old man. I saw her just now getting out of the waggon up at his place. I think that Randall would take it friendly like if you'd just go up and offer to help him. I'd go myself, but I've got some stuff I must get through before night."

Markwell put down his pick, which he had been using as a lever, and climbed up to the bank on which Stokes stood.

"This is no lie of yours, is it?" he said.

"No; it's gospel truth."

"All right then; I'll go."

And, leaving his Kaffirs to get on without him as best they could, he strode away along the path to the canteen.

As he drew near, it became evident to him that Stokes had spoken the truth, a lurking doubt as to that gentleman's veracity having still obtruded itself upon him; for, standing in front of the tent, was a white-tilted waggon with its long span of oxen. The Tottie driver was wrestling with a heavy wooden box, which he was endeavouring to extricate from the interior of the waggon, and Markwell addressed himself to him for information.

"Where's the young woman?" he asked, as he helped him to lower the box to the ground.

"Gone inside, baaa."

Markwell looked inside the canteen, but the bar was empty, and he could see nothing of the fair arrival. He entered and approached the counter, intending to knock, cough, or attract Randall's attention by some noise, when he heard voices behind the canvas screen which divided the bar from the rear half of the tent. Randall was speaking.

"Now take care you do it all right, and don't go putting your foot in it."

"All right, guv'nor. Don't you excite yourself. I'm all here—I'm Maria," re-

plied a voice that was unknown to Markwell; but which, he concluded, could only be that of the canteen-keeper's sister.

A suppressed chuckle followed this speech, and the two persons continued conversing; while Markwell, either not liking to play the eavesdropper, or, finding himself unable to hear what they were saying—for they were now speaking in lower tones—moved away and stood outside the tent, regarding the stout oxen before him with a critical eye. Presently he heard a slight noise behind him, and, turning round, he saw Randall approaching from behind the screen. The latter nodded to Markwell.

"Maria's come," he said.

"Yes, I thought so, from this caravan outside," replied Markwell. "And I just looked in to see if I could help you in anything."

The proprietorscratched his chin thoughtfully for a moment.

"Well, there ain't anything you can do, thankey. Maria's a bit tired with her journey; you'll see her this evening."

So saying, he once more disappeared behind the screen, and Markwell returned to his claim.

Markwell was somewhat later than usual in going to Randall's bar that night. After taking his customary plunge in the river, he had, from some motive which he could not perhaps have explained even to himself, and although it was not Sunday, put on his other shirt, which he had washed out a day or two before. It was of a rich purple hue, and rejoiced in a luxuriant crop of pockets bursting out all over its front. As he neared the canteen, the confused murmur of voices, and the steady and continued popping of corks, informed him that his friend's stratagem had so far succeeded, and that a large proportion of the inhabitants of Gong-gong had been won from the lures of the black-eyed Malay girl by the superior attractiveness of Miss Randall.

He could not help smiling as he thought of the now deserted condition of the opposition bar-keeper, and congratulated himself upon always having remained one of Randall's most staunch supporters, feeling certain that his sister would make some distinction between her brother's old friends and those of a more recent standing.

The canteen was so crowded when he entered, that it was only with some little difficulty that he succeeded in making his way towards the counter; but a pair of

saucy black eyes, smiling archly at him from behind that obstruction, encouraged him to overcome every obstacle. The saucy eyes were in truth the only good points to be discerned in the countenance of the fair Maria, who, attired in a light cotton dress, was assisting her brother in dispensing drinks. Her complexion was of a red-brown tint, and her skin was not as smooth as it might have been, but this was doubtless due to habitual exposure to sun and air; her mouth, which was rather large, was only redeemed from actual ugliness by the superb white teeth which it enshrined; while her black hair was almost as short as that of a boy, and dotted thickly with numerous little screws of curl-paper. However, to the gentlemen who now filled the tent, and who for many months had not cast eyes upon a white woman, she appeared the personification of female beauty, and they would have indignantly vindicated her charms against those of the Cytherean Venus herself.

Markwell removed his felt hat with a certain awkwardness, as if he had almost forgotten how to make that necessary salutation, and extended his sun-burnt hand towards the fair Maria, who, being informed by Randall that "this was Markwell," shook it warmly and remarked in rather hoarse tones, that she had heard of him from her brother. He endeavoured to mutter his acknowledgements, but, perhaps overcome by the lady's affability, or perhaps ill at ease because he saw Stokes looking at him with a curious smile, he was forced to take shelter behind the bowl of his pipe, and to reinvigorate himself with a "pick-axe," by which designation a fiery mixture of Cape Smoke, Pontac, and ginger beer, was known at the Fields. Later on in the evening, he made some original and interesting remarks upon the state of the weather, which were so smilingly received by the lady, that he was encouraged to continue the conversation; and the fair Maria exhibited such an entire absence of mannerism and affectation, and seemed so much above the ordinary prejudices and little weaknesses of her sex, that when Markwell said "good night," and strode to his tent along the dark and silent path, he thought that she was really one of the nicest young women that it had ever been his fortune to meet.

Before a week had passed, Markwell's attentions to Miss Randall had become so

marked, and his attendance at the canteen of which she was the Hebe was so constant, even at hours during which a popular prejudice had decreed that none but "loafers" could be absent from their claims, that men winked at each other expressively whenever he passed near them, and referred to him with amused grins as "the bridegroom"; while some of the more venturesome among these humourists even went so far as to ask him not to forget them when the wedding came off. These sallies, however, were not received by Markwell with his usual careless indifference. On one or two occasions, he even showed his want of appreciation of the joke by applying various uncomplimentary epithets to the most persistent of the wits, promising also, in case of necessity, to bring physical arguments into play, in order to put a stop to such misplaced humour; and as it was known that he could at need sling an ugly left, the intimation at once had the desired effect.

Miss Randall's conduct, and her motives in encouraging the attentions of her ungainly admirer, were discussed freely and unconventionally by the community. Many of the younger men, perhaps smarting under a feeling that their own merits and personal charms had not been properly appreciated, characterized her behaviour as "indecent" and "disgusting"; but the majority of diggers were of opinion that the young lady was merely amusing herself at the expense of her swain, or, as they graphically termed it, was "just fooling him."

"I saw the old fool risking his precious neck to get her a bit o' pink blossom out o' one of them big trees below the drift," said a confirmed misogynist. "And, just like all wimmen, she'd no sooner got it than she said she didn't want it, and that she hated flowers and such trash."

"He wasted a fine four-carat stone on her the other morning," added another. "He was givin' it to her just as I went into the bar."

Certainly, Markwell had nothing to complain of on the score of coyness in his mistress. Twice she had condescended to go down to the river-side and watch him at work at the sorting table, jumping over the rocks and little pools of water that lay in her way, with an innocent abandon which a more hypercritical society would perhaps have stigmatised as indecorous. It was with a childish delight that she watched her admirer remove tray after tray of glisten-

ing river agates from the cradle; and when she rocked that useful machine for a few moments with her foot, the onlookers at once discovered that the action was but a new development of the maternal instinct.

"She appears to be getting her hand in for the heavy business of marriage," said Italy. "It's the same kind of natural instinct that makes little girls nurse dolls."

Although all these marks of preference were thus lavished upon him, Markwell was not quite easy in his mind. Upon two occasions he had, on entering the canteen, discovered Stokes engaged in an animated conversation with the bewitching Maria. These conversations had been cut short directly he appeared; but on one of the two occasions he had distinctly heard his name mentioned. The coldness with which Miss Randall usually treated Stokes, and the unmistakable rebuffs which she daily showered upon him, seemed, too, to speak of a dislike so exaggerated, that after a few days Markwell began to suspect that it was merely assumed to disguise a feeling of quite another nature. From that moment he began to hate Stokes, whom he could not help acknowledging to be a most formidable rival, both on account of his fluency of speech and undeniable good looks, and because of his former acquaintance with the young lady in her native town. Relations between the two men began to be somewhat strained, and the spirits of the camp became generally exhilarated at the speedy prospect of a row.

One evening, some three weeks after Miss Randall's arrival in camp, Markwell was horrified, on entering the canteen somewhat earlier than the usual hour, to hear a man's voice behind the canvas partition which was believed by the community to screen the young lady's sleeping apartment from the public gaze, and that voice was not the voice of her brother. Scandalised to the last degree, and with ears quickened by jealousy, he soon recognised the tones as those of his rival; and, with the unbiassed judgement and calm consideration so peculiar to lovers, he at once put the worst construction upon his presence there. His first impulse was to burst upon the guilty pair, and shame them by his sudden apparition; his second, to wait outside for the hated rival and challenge him to mortal combat; but, on third thoughts, he decided to go away quietly to his tent, and deliberate upon his course of action.

Feeling conscious that conversation was not his strong point, and hoping to call into life the dormant germs of poesy which he felt certain that Nature had implanted in him, he had borrowed from Italy, some days previously, a book which the artist had assured him was "brimful of love and such sickly nonsense," intending, if possible, to turn some of the most flattering speeches to his own account. The book was a novel which had been in fashion at the commencement of the present century, at which period, according to the author, people still conversed upon stilts. What he had already read of it, had, he considered, justified a further confidence in its lessons, and to it he now turned for advice in the unpleasant circumstances in which he found himself. In the first chapter, which treated of two murders, an abduction, a secret marriage, and a haunted castle, he had read that when a young lady had suffered her affections to be engrossed by one of the sterner sex, she invariably treated the unfortunate object of her passion with coldness and disdain; while, on the other hand, she lavished her amiability upon some person towards whom she was totally indifferent. Viewed in the light of his recent discovery, how true, how unfailing was this proposition! The fair Maria had overwhelmed him with condescension and encouragement, while she had rarely spoken to Stokes, except to snub him. What a wonderful knowledge of human nature the gifted author of this priceless work must have acquired!

On this evening he hastily turned over the leaves to discover what mode of procedure was recommended for obtaining reparation for injury from a rival. He was unable to find a case exactly parallel with his own; but he read that, when rival suitors for a fair damsel's hand chanced to meet, they addressed each other in stilted phrases and with strange oaths, and finally endeavoured to introduce several feet of cold steel to each other. He pondered long over this, wondering if it would be practicable for him to remove Stokes from the scene of action in this manner. He was obliged to decide that it was impossible. In the first place he had no sword, and he doubted whether a revolver or sheath knife could be used with propriety in such cases. In the second place, he remembered that in these degenerate days, should he chance to be the victor in the combat, an unpoetical judge and a matter-of-fact

hangman would probably demand his attention to matters totally foreign to the original subject. While still thinking this over, the remnant of his candle disappeared with a hissing noise and much smoke into the interior of the bottle which did duty as candlestick; and he fell asleep to dream that an enormous eel, with the head and shoulders of Mr. Stokes, kept waltzing gracefully before him on its tail, while he made frantic but ineffectual efforts to slay it with a jewelled-hilted rapier.

He was awakened by some hard substance coming forcibly in contact with his ribs, and, opening his eyes, he perceived that the sun had risen, and that Stokes was standing over him, stirring him up with the toe of one of his formidable boots.

Half awake, and still confused by his dream, he sprang to his feet.

"I've got something to tell you," said Stokes, seating himself on the end of an empty brandy case.

This was said so lugubriously, and the man's appearance was so sad and downcast, that Markwell at once divined that something of importance had occurred; perhaps that the outraged Randall had demanded satisfaction for the injury done to his sister's fair fame, and he prepared himself to be as dignified and as sarcastic as possible.

Stokes sighed.

"I'm going to leave the camp to-day," he said, wiping his bronzed face with his shirt-sleeve, as if to conceal his emotion. "I've played the bold game, and I've lost. This ain't no place for me now."

Markwell made no remark, and the speaker continued:

"It's a queer come-down for me. I've always laughed at wimmen and gals, and never troubled my head about them; and now to go such a reg'lar mucker over a bit of a gal like that, and to be told fair and square to clear out."

"Who's told you to clear out?"

"Maria."

A few moments of dead silence followed this disclosure, during which Stokes gazed sorrowfully down at his boots.

"I loved that gal, Jimmy," he said, presently. "So help me, I loved that gal better than I ever thought to have cared for anything in a petticoat. You and me was old friends," he continued, stretching out his hand and resting it on his companion's shoulder, "yet, all along o' that gal, we've been getting cool and nearly

quarrelling. But I didn't care a bit for that—friends, fun, lick—all was as nothin' to me compared with that gal."

Markwell took his friend's hand and wrung it silently.

"'Twas only last night," went on the disconsolate Stokes, "I said to myself I'll play the plucky game, and I went up there private like, and straight out asked her to marry me. . . . She said 'No,' she couldn't. I felt just mad, and I asked her, 'Why not?' Says she, 'You're no gentleman, Mr. Stokes, or you'd take your answer and go.' I says, 'Maria, just tell me this. Is there any one in camp you like better nor me? Just tell me that, so that I can lay round for him with a club?' 'Ho,' says she, with her eyes flashin', 'and that's what you call love, Mr. Stokes, is it? You love me so much that you want to make me unhappy by killing the man I'm fond of.' I swore I wouldn't do no such thing, that I was wild, and didn't know what I was saying, and I asked her again to tell me the man. Says she, 'His name begins with a M.' I says, 'It's Jimmy Markwell;' and she says, 'I ain't agoing to deny it.' . . . Jimmy, I felt bad, though I might have guessed that you would be the happy man. I thought that in the night I'd come down here, and then we'd see who was the best man. But then I thought again, what good would that do me? She'd never have me. So the long and short of it is, I'm going down to the Rush—I can't stay here now, and I just came to tell you all about it, and make friends again."

Markwell seized his visitor's hand, and wrung it until the tears came into his eyes.

"Say no more, say no more," he ejaculated. "I'm sorry for you, old chap! Let's go and lick."

On their way to the canteen Markwell confided to Stokes his suspicions of the previous night.

"You must have just reached there as I was proposin'," said the latter. "I asked her if I might just step behind for a minute."

Relieved by this simple explanation, Markwell went on to tell him how his worst fears had been seemingly confirmed by the authority of the novel. His companion treated with ridicule its dogma as to the manner in which young ladies usually behaved to secretly-favoured lovers.

"It's a set of lies," he said, contemptuously. "Chuck the dratted thing away."

The two men entered Randall's tent arm-in-arm. The fair Maria received them with a certain amount of uneasiness. Markwell thought that her red-brown cheek was suffused with a deeper tint, when she perceived in whose company he was; and from this he surmised that she had, with the intuitive perception of her sex, already guessed that Stokes had violated her confidence.

Each man swallowed his drink in solemn silence, and Maria occupied herself in attempting to wipe the tumblers, left by the revellers of the past night, with a cloth of doubtful cleanliness. While she was thus employed, Stokes seized the opportunity to advise Markwell to press his suit.

"Go in and win, old man," he whispered. "Now's your time. I'm going off to get my few traps together, and you'll have her all to yourself. It's too early for anyone to come up here from the claims yet."

So saying, he once more wrung his companion's hand and strode out of the tent.

Left to himself, Markwell determined not to waste any precious time, but to come to the point at once.

"Maria," he said, "I'm a plain man, and I like plain speaking. I've had my fling in my time, and I've known wimmin and their ways more than has, perhaps, been good for me. Still, I've gained experience by that, and I know now how to tell an honest and straightforward gal from a flighty one. So what I have to say is this. If you'll take me I'll make you a good husband, and you shall never have a cross word or blow from me as long as you live."

Miss Randall had laid down the glass-cloth, and was gazing at the speaker with eyes wide open with amazement.

"As for position, I've got a little bit of land down at Durban, and this," continued Markwell, taking a small tin box from his pocket, and pouring a glittering little cascade of diamonds from hand to hand. "We shan't want, and I'm sure you'll never be sorry for marrying me."

He looked up as he concluded his speech, just in time to see Miss Randall disappearing behind the canvas screen; and next moment a hysterical sound, which he feared sounded strangely like suppressed laughter, broke upon his ear.

"Perhaps I was too hasty," he murmured, as with a trembling hand he nervously tried to fix the lid upon his tin box and restore that to his pocket. "Anyhow, I'll wait here till I get an answer."

In a few seconds Randall appeared from behind the partition. He looked curiously at Markwell.

"What's this you've been saying to Maria?" he inquired.

"Nothing that I need be ashamed of, or that you need get riled about. I've asked Maria to be my wife."

Randall appeared annoyed.

"You've made a pratty mess of it, you have," he said.

"How?"

"Maria ain't my sister at all."

"Not your sister? What is she then? Your wife, I s'pose. But of all the mean plants, to go passing her off as your sister——! It's playing it pretty low down on this camp, and on me particularly."

"Go slow, go slow," interrupted Randall; "there's no such hurry. She ain't my wife nor sweetheart either."

"Then what in thunder is she?"

"Just this—she's my young brother. You see how it was," he went on hastily. "There was that fellow Cobb drawing every idle fool up to his place with his Malay gal. You may remember you advised me to bring up a white one. Well, I hadn't any sisters. I didn't know whom to get; so I got my young brother to come up from Hopetown, dressed as a gal. And he came, and he's Maria. That's all."

"Oh, that's all, is it?"

"Yes, that's all. And now Cobb's gone. He went off last night, clean broke, so we're not going to keep the game up any longer; but nobody knows about this mistake of yours except us three, and you may depend it shan't go no further. You've always stuck to me, and now I'll stick to you. All the other chaps were taken in just the same as you, except Stokes. He knew all about it, of course."

"Oh! he knew, did he? Hang him," said Markwell, nervously turning to the door.

"Yes. He knew. He's a Hopetown man, same as myself."

"And it won't go any further, you think. Just look over there and you'll see."

And Markwell pointed out of the tent door to a group of diggers standing away down on the river-bank. In the midst of them, Stokes was distinctly visible; and to judge from the shouts of laughter and the convulsive movements of the men surrounding him, he was apparently making some amusing communication to them.

"There he is," said the unfortunate digger, savagely. "He put me up to the whole thing this very morning, and now he's fooling me to the whole camp."

As he spoke, the group below moved away from the river, and struck into the path leading to Randall's canteen.

"They're coming up here," said the manager of that establishment, "and I guess you're in no hurry to meet them. You can go out by the back door, they won't see you then." And he led Markwell behind the screen to the back of the tent, where a narrow path led through the acacia scrub up to the plateau behind.

He had hardly disappeared amongst the bushes when a noisy, shouting, and laughing crowd rushed into the bar, asking for Markwell; and, upon Randall assuring them that he had left some little time before, they proceeded in a body to his tent, and then to his claim; but finding him at neither of those places, they decided to wait until evening for their amusement.

Evening came, and night, and the next morning, but Markwell appeared not; and the general opinion was that he dared not face the laughter of the entire camp, and had gone to try his luck at dry diggings. Three days later, however, as Italy was wandering about with a gun in the scrub about a mile below camp, looking out for a shot at a pouw or a buck, he suddenly disturbed a number of vultures, who were engaged in their usual loathsome task. Naturally imagining the prey to be the carcase of an ox or a mule, he was about to turn aside when a long digger's boot caught his eye, and he saw the half-devoured remains of a man, lying stretched on his back. The torn fingers were still grasping a revolver, and the unhappy man had died by his own hand. It was Markwell.

A REVIEW OF DOGS.

UNDER the shade of the elms of Barnes, within the ancient park which still holds gallantly out against the ever-advancing battalions of bricks and mortar, even with the July heat a meeting of some two thousand dogs passed off very pleasantly. In a general way, the fancy of a dog fancier is strictly specialised and limited. The lover of Bulldogs has no interest in Clumber Spaniels; the breeder of Setters looks superciliously on Collies; while the patron of Pugs has

nothing to say to the honest Scotch Terrier. But, for once in a way, under the auspices of the Kennel Club, we had a general gathering of typical specimens of nearly all classes of dogs. The huge Plinlimmon was there, that chief among St. Bernards, perhaps the biggest and handsomest of his kind ever seen; while, at the other end of the show, you might see a proud exhibitor holding out his diminutive Toy on the palm of one hand, while he diligently brushed and combed its silken coat with the other. If we had lost touch of the dogs of the day, and had gone on worshipping old favourites out of date and old-fashioned, here was the place to bring us to a level with existing circumstances; while it was also encouraging to remark that, in spite of the caprices of fashion, plenty of the old stock are still left, and that whole classes of dogs have gone on increasing and flourishing, quite unconscious of having been deserted by public favour.

Here were Bloodhounds, still heading the catalogue by right of ancient descent and former honour; but either our ideas have become enlarged, or the Bloodhound of to-day is not the formidable creature he was of old. This surely is not the dog that brought the Bruce to bay, nor these the creatures that, according to "Enfield's Speaker," "hunted down the unfortunate natives of Mexico." Yet these dogs are highly valued by their owners; and there is a lady dog among them that her owner modestly offers to part with for the sum of a million.

Those famous old-fashioned, shaggy Otter-hounds are getting scarce, too, and highly valued. There were only two in the show, and, perhaps the owner of the brace was reasonable enough in offering one of these for ten thousand pounds.

The old English Mastiff has still a strong phalanx of admirers, but careful breeding has developed rather asymmetry than size. "The Mastive or Bandogge," described by Caius in his treatise of "Englishe Dogges," was more of a mongrel, probably, "terrible and frightful to behold, and more fierce and fell than any Arcadian Curra." These dogs were generally tawny probably, as they are "said to have their generation of the violent Lion;" but the colour most in favour at the present day is rather fawn or mouse. The monks of old may be credited with having favoured the English Mastiff. Men of peace, with much treasure often in their

keeping, the monks reared great dogs as guards, and no doubt took much interest in their faithful friends and companions. The white Mastiffs of Delacres Abbey, in Staffordshire, were noted in their time, and the subject of sundry curious legends.

The grandest and most favourite dog of the present day we also owe to the monks of more recent times. The St. Bernard, whose home is the monastery among the Alpine passes, is certainly the most popular dog of the present day, as witness the crowds of admirers who press about Plinlimmon. The noble dog seems to be admirable in temper as in all other points, but receives the caresses of his admirers with the calm indifference of a Royal personage. But he thoroughly understands the ways of a show, and the sight of the feeder on his rounds gives a certain animation to his expressive face.

The popularity of the St. Bernard has put rather in the shade the old favourite, the Newfoundland. When Landseer was in his prime, what dog received more applause than his "Member of the Royal Humane Society!" Landseer's dog was black and white; but the colour "*de rigueur*" in a Newfoundland is black, only a white star being allowed on the breast, in exchange for the old-fashioned, handsome shirt-front.

But all our big dogs alike were threatened by the Great Dane, which in appearance resembles a poacher's mongrel dog, but on a vastly grander scale. The dog, however, has a strong phalanx of supporters, and at our typical dog show, as many entries appeared of Great Danes as of the once paramount Saint Bernards—about a hundred and thirty dogs of each kind being present on the benches of this canine parliament. The Great Dane is, in fact, the German Boarhound. It is so long since we in England had the privilege of hunting wild boars, wolves, and such cattle, that we possess no distinctive breed devoted to their capture. The rough, shaggy, Otterhound, now almost superseded in his own particular sport, is perhaps a sole representative of the dog accustomed to the pursuit of ferocious beasts. But Ireland had wolves until more recent times, and the Irish Wolfhound is still in existence.

There is no essential difference between the Wolfhound and the Deerhound, except that the latter is finer, and more speedy. The Deerhound was another favourite of Landseer's, and suggests pictures of hills covered with heather and deer-stalkers crouching thereon with the hounds

straining at their leash. Dr. Caius seems to allude to the Deerhound as the Gazehound, so called because he hunts by sight and not by scent; and he also describes the Greyhound fully, although he does not account for the name, which can hardly be derived from the colour of the animal.

As we are now in the domain of sporting dogs, we find the old English Pointer still a favourite show animal, although his employment in the field is now much restricted. You have probably hitherto imagined the Griffon to be a fabulous beast; the best available French dictionary declares it so to be; but Griffons appear at the dog show, and prove to be nothing more formidable than a rough-coated variety of Pointer, all of which Griffons hail from Holland or Belgium. The Setter is a dog of English blood, and is mentioned by Caius among the "*gentle dogges serving the hawks*." But the red or Irish Setter seems to be a distinct variety, probably of Celtic origin. One of the most ancient poems of Wales, attributed to a native Prince, describes

Ystec, my dog, that is well trained;
Dormartheidd, with the brown nose,
That ranges with a serpent's motion—

a description which suggests vividly enough the motion of a Setter at work in the field. The Retriever is a more modern cross, with something of the Setter and Newfoundland in his composition, and is aptly divided into wavy-coated and curly-coated varieties.

The old English kennels contained also a hound, known, according to Caius, as the *Leviner* or *Lymmer*, the Limehound of later writers; and the same author describes a strange kind of dog called the *Tumbler*, which by his antics and acrobatic feats, disarmed the natural suspicions of his quarry, and was thus able to approach within snatching distance. This grotesque kind of beast was perhaps a near approach to the German *Dachshund*, the *Badgerhound* of our Teutonic kinsmen, a breed lately come into favour as domestic pets.

The pretty, merry Beagle, whose voice in full cry was so tuneable, is no longer in much demand; but a French breed of dog, which somewhat suggests the Beagle, called the *Basset-hound*, is a likely candidate for admission to fashionable society. He is a handsome miniature hound with long silken ears, and the shortest of legs splayed outwards in a charmingly grotesque manner.

The shepherd's hounds include the faithful but troublesome Collie, and the smooth-coated Welsh dog, not nearly so handsome.

but more useful to the shepherd. There are Bobtails, too, one is glad to see, for the old-fashioned Bobtail is not often met with in these days.

The spotted Dalmatians never appeal much to popular sympathies, mere appendages to a carriage and pair as they are generally considered; nor is the Pomeranian a general favourite, though there are people to be found who love him exceedingly. But the Poodle is a charming dog; and a black one, well shaved and trimmed, is quite a picture of a kind. But, alas! the Black Poodle's reign of fashion is now over—he is no longer the necessary adjunct of beauty in the Park, he occupies no more the favoured cushion in the boudoir.

Fashion may chop and change, but the Bulldog always holds his own. The Bulldog is, no doubt, descended from the Mastiff, for the dogs engaged in the old and barbarous sports of bull and bear baiting were rather Mastiffs than the breed now known as Bulldogs.

The Bull Terrier, too, has enthusiastic admirers—in the Midlands especially—and for people who love to see smaller animals killed expeditiously, he is an unexceptionable pet. But a rough-coated Bull Terrier, such as the Airedale, has also its fanciers, who value their animals at fifties and hundreds of pounds.

A greater contrast cannot be imagined than that between the ugly and indomitable race of Bulldogs and the graceful and timid Spaniel. From Spain comes the Spaniel, no doubt, as his name denotes; but the most beautiful of all the Spaniels comes from France, the original pair having, it is said, been given to the Duke of Newcastle by the Duc de Noailles; and at Clumber, the lovely seat of the Clintons, in Sherwood Forest, the breed was long jealously preserved.

A nice dog, too, is the brisk little Cocker, familiar in the sporting prints of the early years of this century, when the tall hat, green coat, and spatterdashes were accompanied by the single-barrelled fowling-pieces of the flint-lock type.

The Fox Terrier is alike popular both as a sporting and a fancy dog. He is not so called as being the offspring of the cross between fox and dog, although such alliances are not unknown. Caius even enumerates three classes of dogs, the products of crosses with wild animals. In one, the sire is a wolf; in the next, a fox; and in the third, the sire is a bandog and

the mother a bear. And this raises the question as to the origin of the dog, which has been generally ascribed to both wolf and fox; but the geological record points to the existence of a distinct species of wild dog existing concurrently with his cruel and crafty cousins. To return to the Fox Terrier, who alone of his "confrères" justifies their common name, "Terrars, because they creepe into the ground," as Caius hath it. The Fox Terrier, employed to bolt the fox from his earth when, hotly pursued, he has gained that place of refuge, is a more rough-and-ready customer than the elegant little dogs which find their places in a show; but the popularity of the breed, with both gentle and simple, may be judged by the fact that, in our typical show, more than two hundred and fifty entries of Fox Terriers were made, far exceeding that of any other class. Indeed, as a companion, the Fox Terrier is difficult to beat, and his knowing air and confidential manner attract the affection of the most obdurate.

To many it will be a novelty to find that Wales and Ireland both produce a distinct race of Terriers, which present, however, no striking points of difference with the wiry Scotch. And of the Terriers formerly known as Scotch, a more critical age has established sundry classes which hail from this side of the Border. There is the Bedlington, for instance, which resembles the Dandie much as his Northumbrian master resembles a Scot; and the Yorkshire Terrier, with long, silky coat, a favourite companion of the youths and maidens of the earlier years of the present reign, and then often loosely termed a "Skye." It is this kind of small, long-haired dog, whether Yorkshire or "Skye," that is fiercely apostrophised by Curtius, in whose days it seems to have been a novelty. "Iseland dogges, curled and rough all over, showing neither face nor body, a beggarly beast, brought out of barbarous borders."

Delightful are the Dandie Dinmonts, affectionate, intelligent, and courageous—the Peppers especially, the Mustard variety seems to want flavour—happy, too, in their association with Sir Walter Scott's finest touches. The Skyes, too, will always claim respect, although fallen out of fashion. The breed, by the way, still exists upon the Island of Skye; but finer specimens are in the hands of the fanciers. Then there are Clydesdale Terriers, with the general

features of the generic Scotch; and the inevitable black-and-tan, sometimes called English, but which seems to belong exclusively to no particular clime or realm. The Schipperkes, familiarly called Skips, are, perhaps, the latest development of the Terrier fancy, and these hail from Belgium; but of their origin no man knows.

The passion for Pugs is now a matter of history, and yet there exists a Pug Club, flourishing and well supported. And to come to the "delicate, neate, and pretty kind of dogges called the Spaniel gentle," beginning with the Maltese, which are more properly Spaniels than Terriers, and which, according to Caius, were the originals of these Toy dogs: "Malta, an iseland, indeed famous and renowned, where this kind of dogge had their principal beginning."

Then come King Charles Spaniels, the favourite breed of the Merry Monarch, which are scarce enough now; as are Blenheims, originally introduced to this country by the great Duke of Marlborough. These are dogs that have had their day, and yet are highly valued by their particular fanciers.

Then, there are Tricolours and Rubies, which are valued far above rubies by their breeders, the champion of the class being priced at two thousand pounds, while a pint mug would make a commodious kennel for the little animal.

Italian Greyhounds and Toy Terriers vie with each other in diminutive fragility. Anxious exhibitors are at hand with coats and wraps, to muffle up their little charges, at the slightest sign of a change of temperature.

Such are the tribes of dogs, as represented in the general show of the Kennel Club. There are more than fifteen other Clubs which make a specialty of some particular breed; hold their shows; offer prizes and cups; but the Kennel Club, like the Jockey Club in racing matters, propounds its code of laws, which is generally adopted by the subsidiary meetings.

Foxhounds have their own particular world, and being bred for use in the field and not for show, do not come within the scope of the fancy. Dogs, too, are bred for fighting, as well as for racing; but these are out of the pale of dogs of pedigree and condition. With these exceptions, the race of English dogs is here presented, with tolerable completeness, at one coup d'œil.

"YOU MUST NOT COUNT YOUR CHICKENS BEFORE THEY ARE HATCHED."

To the heart of the man void of imagination, there are few maxims dearer than the one above written. With such a one, it holds equal rank with the aphorism, that it is well to call a spade a spade, and other such utterances of the uncompromising spirit of what is called plain common-sense. Many times have I heard it from the mouth of my old friend Crocker, when he happened to be in his most truculent mood; and perhaps I shall not be saying too much, if I declare that it contains within its limits no small portion of the Crockerian system of philosophy. In using the above rather imposing-looking phrase, I do not wish to elevate Crocker to the rank of the founder of a system. When I dealt specially with him in a former paper,* I only intended to hold him up as a type, a type abundant, it is true, in Crocker's own social class, but to be found readily enough in a slightly altered form amongst very superior persons indeed. Many gallant officers I have known, both naval and military, who have called spades—spades with the greatest assiduity; and even Church dignitaries and University professors are sometimes strangers to anything like a flight of fancy. The want of imagination is no special heritage of any particular caste.

I have often observed that men who have acquired the habit of tricking out their speech with maxims, and thus give to their utterances a point, which they certainly would not possess in their original simplicity, are prone to lose all concern with the spirit of the proverb, and content themselves with looking a little wiser than usual as the sentence rolls off the tongue. They are quite satisfied with the sound of authority given by the form of words; and so, as a rule, are the persons whom they address. Thus the practice has grown very dear to them, and this is not to be wondered at; for assuredly they might search far before they could find another so convenient and easy a method of acquiring a reputation for wisdom. If anyone so inclined should read my discursive remarks on this subject, he will, I

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. xl. p. 447.

fear, lift up his heel against me as an iconoclastic nuisance—that is, if he thinks me worth his resentment. In any case, I don't suppose for a moment that I should convince him of his error. I have certain little pet beliefs of my own, points of faith to which I hold on grimly with persistent teeth and claws, for no other reason than that my life is made happier by giving them credit. They have one and all been destroyed, and pulverised over and over again by sympathetic friends, careful of my reputation as a thinker, and by the anonymous teachers of the weekly and monthly reviews; but they are as lively to-day as they were at the moment when they first won the assent of my reasoning faculties. The steadfast believer in the use of maxims as adornments of discourse, occupies exactly the same ground as I do myself; and he will, if I understand anything of human nature, persevere in his beliefs in spite of my puny onslaughts against his favourite weakness.

A good part of this confidence in the wisdom and validity of a particular maxim, arises from a disinclination or inability to investigate, or observe, what would be the consequences of its universal application. The maxim is at first very often picked up haphazard. It is discovered in the pages of a favourite writer, or in the mouth of a revered friend. It strikes the fancy of the finder at first, and is at once adopted as a leading article of his not very extensive mental stock-in-trade.

Thus men who have been unlucky enough to adopt the maxim, upon which I am now making war, as a leading truth, go through the world without knowing anything of the delights of castle-building, which is merely another form of chicken-counting, so anything like a prohibition, supposing such an event to be possible, would strike them but lightly; but just consider, O reader, what would be the consequences for you and me—for I assume from your present occupation that you are a person gifted with imagination and a fine literary taste. Just try and realise what life would be like, if it were declared to be an indictable offence to take refuge from the worry and turmoil of the world in the pleasant land of dreams, whether they be of the castle-building or chicken-counting order. "It's all sheer waste of time, and what can you expect from a man who is always letting his wits run wool-gathering?" Such is the judgement of the practical man. Practical,

forsooth! So is the ostrich practical, when it executes that strange head-burying operation described in the natural history books of my youth.

The practical man is earnest in his struggle for bread, and for the divers toothsome accessories with which it seems good to him that his table should be furnished in addition to the staff of life; but how prone he is to forget that man does not live by bread alone! The body, well developed and healthily nourished, is indeed the groundwork of a happy existence; but the mind, even of the practical man, must have some method of occupation in those moments of unbending, which are plentiful even in the severest struggle with the world; and how can it disport itself so harmlessly as in drawing and colouring some fair picture of gratified desire in the not very distant future, or in bringing to a triumphant conclusion some matter of business, as yet perhaps only just set going and not prospering overmuch. So seductive does this recreation seem to me that I am quite unable to believe that any man, even though he be as unimaginative as Crocker himself, can altogether resist its charm. Perhaps the practical man, in his hours of unbending, counts his chickens without knowing how or why, just as I have seen in Continental cities the withered old peasant women mumbling their prayers and counting their beads in the Cathedral, while their thoughts were evidently bent upon the basket of eggs and onions at their feet, in speculation as to how many coins it might bring in the market outside. As he surveys the shop windows of Oxford Street from the top of the morning omnibus, or puffs the evening tobacco after the labours of the City, does the practical man never count chickens like other weak mortals? To me it seems almost inevitable that he should now figure to himself a successful transaction in tallow or moist sugar to be negotiated before the end of the day, and now plan between the whiffs of smoke the construction of a "corner" in one or other of the necessaries of life which shall, if the pot be put to boil judiciously, bring him a fortune sudden and ample. No doubt he would be better employed if he were to seek complete mental change in the perusal of my last new novel; but if he finds pleasure in his reflections, though they do smell of the shop, who shall blame him? Only let him take care not to be so hard upon chicken-counting in the future.

Since I have been considering the bearings of this maxim, I have often found diversion in speculating as to the particular form of chicken-counting which this or that of the men I know would be likely to indulge in; for they all do it, whether they be practical men of the deepest dye, or mere wool-gatherers like myself. I have also wormed myself into the confidence of some of my friends with the view of learning their own particular lines, and I feel I cannot do better than set down here the result of some of my investigations.

From what I have discovered, I have no hesitation in saying that there is no such a thing as forecasting a man's ideals from any circumstances which one may know about his tastes or condition. I will begin with my friend Livelings, who, for the last fifteen years, has been doctoring the bodies of his fellow men in a not very opulent suburb, which contains within its limits many large industrial establishments, such as gas-works, brick-fields, market-gardens, and other places of business, grouped round a canal basin. The capitalists connected with these undertakings prudently live elsewhere, so they know nothing of Dr. Livelings and his works; but, on the other hand, Dr. Livelings knows enough, and perhaps more than enough, about their workmen, and their workmen's wives and children. Whether they grow as rich as the social Democrats declare they do in the exploitation of their working brethren, I know not; I only know that Dr. Livelings has not grown rich in the medication of the same. I know nothing indeed of the secrets of his exchequer; but I am ready to hazard a guess that, during the last fifteen years, his wages, considered in relation to his hours of labour, have been beggarly indeed. Nine Hours' Bills, Workshop Regulation Bills, were not drawn and passed into law to meet cases like his. Livelings is a servant of the public, and he has to get to work whenever his master calls, even though he may call at midnight, when it is snowing hard. Should he, according to the estimate of those summoning him, delay overmuch in ministering to the bloody nose of an Irishman who has come to grief in a fight in Wragg's Buildings; or to the bruised head of a cabman a little the worse for liquor, who has fallen from his seat in the course of an exciting midnight race; the grateful and enlightened populace will probably smash his windows, and possibly do him bodily harm when he at last appears.

He is a bachelor, and his house—nice and well-ordered as it is—is bare and unsympathetic from the lack of that indefinable something which the presence of a woman always gives. It wears an aspect of prim neatness under the hands of his excellent housekeeper, Mrs. Hardman, which I would gladly see give place to a certain amount of wifely disorder. There is an air of chill though disciplined neglect over every part of it save over the one room which serves for refectory, library, smoking-room, and all; for Livelings found it impossible, when setting up as a householder, to shake off the old lodging-house habit and march formally from his dinner to another room, to take a spell of ease over his pipe and newspaper. The arm-chairs in the chimney-corners are comfortable and roomy; there are books and pipes and tobacco close at hand; and last, but by no means least, there is a hearty welcome for me whenever I may look in for an evening chat.

Though my friend's life is assuredly not an unhappy one, it is not so unduly full of content, I am certain, as to restrain him from castle-building and chicken-counting whenever he gets half-an-hour's rest with his pipe, and his slippers, and his old coat. He is not the man to wear his heart upon his sleeve; but with a very little trouble I succeeded in getting at the drift of his aspirations; and in what direction, think you, is the idea of his life to be found? In a stately house in Harley Street, with the waiting-room crammed every morning with double-fee patients; with a writing-table strewn with notes of invitation bidding him to the tables of the great, which he answers promptly in the affirmative, except when he may be busy with that paper which the College of Physicians is languishing to hear?

No; emphatically no! Livelings is no scorner of the good things of the world; but he yearneth not after such a reward as the one above depicted. I don't believe he would, under any circumstances, exchange Matilda Crescent for Harley Street, without a sigh. His house is quite good enough for his requirements; and if he could but add to its furniture the one ornament after which his soul hungers, it would seem a very palace of delights. Life, he often tells himself, is a starved, dull affair, to a man who, after a day spent in fighting the grisly forces of disease and evil, comes home to a blank fireside, and meets there no word of sympathy or cheer-

fulness to drive out of his ears the sound of querulous ingratitude with which they pretty surely will have been assailed during the day.

Then his thoughts will wander down to a Worcestershire Vicarage, and he will smile a little sadly as he surveys, in a mental picture, a bright little woman, working like a slave to smooth the way for the falling footsteps of her old father, and to stretch out the income of a hundred and ninety pounds a year, so that it may yield a margin for comforts for the old man. A pang shoots through Livelings' heart as he remembers how largely these comforts must be furnished by the curtailment of the daughter's necessities; and he wishes with all his heart that he might be allowed to give his mite in aid; but pride, he knows well, bars the way. A Stilton cheese at Christmas is the only offering he has ever dared to make. Once he was sorely tempted to add a York ham; but he remembered that the grazing of swine formed a part of the domestic economy of the Vicarage, so that he refrained, fearing that his gift might not partake sufficiently of the nature of a luxury. He writes a letter to the Vicar to announce the dispatch of the Stilton cheese; and to this an answer always comes, in a lady's handwriting, saying how delighted papa is with Doctor Livelings' kind present. He is just now busy with his sermon, and hopes that the Doctor will not take it amiss that he has got his little secretary to answer it. In reply to this Livelings writes again to the Vicarage, the letter not being addressed to the Vicar on this occasion; so, perhaps he does take it amiss. What do you think, candid reader?

When he is in his more sanguine moods, I have a notion that Livelings must anticipate the season when a new Vicar shall minister in the place of the life-weary old man down in Worcestershire, and a brisk and happy companion shall sit on the other side of the hearth-rug. He must foresee that when this event comes to pass, a few flowers will sometimes shed brightness about the dingy rooms; that he will hear now and then some old favourite songs of his sung by a pretty little voice, true and clear as a bell still, in spite of a prolonged struggle against the fearsome Midland accent in the village choir; and—for my friend is but a failing mortal after all—that the breakfast menu may no longer be limited to three strips of

bacon; and that the supper may now and then show a variation from the cold joint of the midday dinner, hacked and hewn during its sojourn in the kitchen regions.

This I gathered was the favourite prospect of my good friend, and it proves that his castle-building was not on a very ambitious scale. Whether he will be wise in carrying out his design is a matter I am not competent to decide. If Septimus Livelings were made of sterner stuff, and could refuse to work without wages, the case would be altered; but I am well-nigh certain that there are continual migrations from the paying to the gratis list of his patients; and I leave it to family folk to determine whether, under such conditions, a man is justified in assuming fresh responsibilities.

But supposing he never gets any further, Livelings has had the pleasure of counting his chickens, and if this process has given a moment's pleasure to so good a man, I maintain it has served a righteous purpose. Shame on the churlish maxim that would discountenance it! I would as soon throw that old briar pipe of my friend's into the fire, and smash that battered brown tobacco-jar, as say a word in disparagement of the practice in Livelings' hearing.

There are others of my friends who hanker after a future still more seemingly inconsistent with their present than Livelings' chicken-counting is, when one meditates as to the natural ambitions of the general practitioner. There is my friend De Burgh, who now fills the post of secretary to a learned society. In official hours he is learned enough himself, and to hear him discourse one would fancy that he would construct for himself a future time of leisure, in which the lighter treatment of some exact science would furnish the principal charm; but no. From what he has told me I have discovered that his dream of happiness is a snug little house in some remote county with half-a-dozen acres of land attached thereto, in the cultivation of which he may test the accuracy of the facts set forth in those interesting shilling hand-books, which profess to teach one how to make five pounds a year out of bees, and ten pounds out of poultry, and twenty out of a cow, and thirty out of pigs, and so on. Of course there are men who never get out of the groove in which they are first set running, men like the croupiers at Wiesbaden, in the old gambling days, who used to spend their holiday punting at

Homburg. These, perhaps, may be the rule, but my friend De Burgh is one of a large class of exceptions.

It is sad to have to admit that this practice, productive of so much innocent enjoyment when moderately indulged in, is sometimes pushed to excess with disastrous consequences. Some there are who count their unhatched chicks with such a lively faith in a successful incubation that the smallest deficiency in the produce, compared with the estimate, will plunge them into the deepest melancholy and despair; but then these are people who attempt to realise the future not for consolation, but out of sheer restlessness. I know a very charming lady, one who has apparently every good gift that fortune can bestow, who is a striking instance of this form of intemperance. I used to think that for her the present must be so full of delights as to render all chicken-counting unnecessary; but it is not so. She is always at it; and, if her desires be in any way within reason, her means would admit of their being gratified to the full, but failure always seems to creep in. Let the harmony sounding in her ears be ever so sweet, there will certainly be one jarring chord. The cunningly woven web displayed to her eyes will have some faulty thread, some discord of colour. The present, however carefully it may have been prepared, is never quite what it should have been, and, more often than not, a grievous disappointment. The chicks are puny and weak, and very likely half the eggs are addled. She draws her eyes away in distaste and sets to work to fashion another future, foreordained surely to turn out just as great a failure as that which has just been merged in the past.

My friend—we will call her Mrs. Auriol—whenever she gives one an account of her present circumstances, never fails to introduce the qualifying “but” as soon as she has finished putting in the brighter tones of the picture. If I praise her house and garden, or the good looks and accomplishments of her eldest son, or her last bit of bric-à-brac, I know well enough that she will, at first, meet my remarks with a languid, melancholy assent and immediately after the warning “but,” proceed to treat me to a long catalogue of woes, concerning the troubles and cares of house-keeping, the wickedness of builders and gardeners, and the deceitfulness of servants; concerning certain untoward tendencies towards billiards and cigars, which have lately

appeared to show that the shades of the prison-house are closing round the head of Master Gustavus; and concerning a report by an expert that her last Japanese bronze is nothing else than an ingenious fabrication from Hamburg.

Now that I know Mrs. Auriol well, I see how little she is to be envied for all the gifts which fate has showered upon her. I pity her indeed, because all her golden clusters turn to dust and ashes; but I pity her most of all because she is bound to lose faith in her castle-building and chicken-counting, for lose faith she must as year after year the real, when it comes within the grasp of the senses, shows an ever increasing inferiority to the ideal. Then she will leave off castle-building, and, what consolation in life will then be left her, I am not prophet enough to determine.

AUSTRALIAN COLLOQUIALISMS.

SLANG is rapidly becoming cosmopolitan. It is an exchangeable commodity. America, in her popular speech, preserves and gives renewed vitality to words and phrases which, a few centuries ago, were in everyday use in England, and in return sends us a large and varied collection of expressions, the vigorous birth of the teeming West. Scores of colloquialisms, familiar to Anglo-Indians, are also familiar to Englishmen in general, both by use and by repute. Colonel Yule's great glossary is a lasting monument of the wealth of this vocabulary. Colonial popular coinages have not, as yet, become so well known here, nor have they affected our own slang to the same extent as the importations from America and from India. But the processes of adoption and absorption are certainly going on. “Larrikin” is perhaps the Australian word best known in this country. The “larrikin” is a familiar character in all lands. In New York he is a “rowdy.” In San Francisco he becomes a “hoodlum,” a scoundrel whose delight it is, with a company of his brother rascals, to descend in force from the American part of the city, upon the detested Chinamen, with results by no means pleasing to those natives of the Flowery Land. In England the “larrikin,” or the “hoodlum,” is known by the short and simple name of “rough.”

Various explanations have been given of the origin of the term “larrikin.” According to one story, the word dates from

the time of the gold fever, when Melbourne suffered greatly from an invasion of roughs and rowdies. A constable, a Scotchman, who was particularly active in the capture of these rascals, accused them to the magistrate as guilty of "larrikin," by which he meant "larking." Another authority says that it was an Irishman who, when charged in an Australian police-court with being drunk and disorderly, pleaded that he was only "larrikin." Mr. Archibald Forbes has given what is probably the most correct explanation. "A Sydney policeman of the Irish persuasion," he says, "brought up a rowdy youngster before the local beak. Asked to describe the conduct of the prisoner, he said, 'Av it plase yer honnor, the blagard wor a larrikin' (larking) 'all over the place.' The expression was taken hold of and applied."

The "larrikin" generally confines himself and his operations to the larger towns; but somewhat akin to him is what may be called his country cousin, the "sundowner." In the bush, and in all "up country" districts, at farm-houses and stations, quarters are always provided for strangers who may be in need of a night's lodging, and the manager will supply the wayfarer with flour for his "damper," and tea to boil in his "billy;" but should the stranger arrive before sunset, he is naturally expected to lend a hand and do some work about the place, by way of earning the shelter and supper ungrudgingly supplied. The "sundowner" is an able-bodied tramp with a strong disinclination to work. He perambulates the country, going "on the Wallaby," as it is strangely termed, nightly receiving the hospitality of the farmers and station-managers whom he honours with his presence, but being always careful to arrive at or after, never before, sundown, so that he may eat the bread of idleness and sleep the sleep of the slothful. In Australian parlance, the "sundowner" may further be described as a "dry hash," or a "stringy bark," that is, a ne'er-do-weel, a fellow not good for much, or, as our American cousins would say, a "mean cuss."

A "swagman" is a different character. The name is given to any one tramping the country for work, or any other purpose, and carrying his worldly goods slung round him in a bundle, which is always known as his "swag." The word "swag" is well known in this country to represent, in the slang of the criminal classes, the

booty or plunder obtained as the result of a successful robbery. When Mr. Sikes "cracks a crib," it is with the object of securing the "swag." But, in Australia, the "swag," also sometimes called a "drum," is the bundle, generally consisting of a large blanket rolled up, which contains the personal luggage of the man who carries, or "humps" it. It is usually worn as a roll passing over the right shoulder and under the left arm. Strapped to the back of the "swag" is a spade, and the swagman's equipment is completed by a small frying-pan, in which he concocts his "damper," and a "billy," a small tin can wherein tea or coffee can be boiled. The tea so made is naturally of rather a rough-and-ready description, and when the stalks and coarse particles of the fragrant leaf float thickly thereon, it is sometimes graphically styled "post-and-rails" tea.

Many Australian words and phrases are, as might be expected, born of and connected with station and bush life. "To go to camp," by a transference of its original meaning, now signifies, in the mouth of a dweller in houses, simply "to lie down," "to go to bed." A "corroboree" is a native dance, and a "gin" is a female aborigine. It may here be noted that Australians invariably speak of themselves as "colonials," not "colonists," and of the natives as "aboriginals," not "aborigines." A young man newly arrived in the Colonies from the Old Country is styled a "new chum," or a "lime-juice." The "new chum" generally betrays his character by the newer cut of his clothes, the shape and brilliance of his hat, otherwise his "stove-pipe," and by the topics of his conversation. But when, having laid aside his "store-clothes," and donned the bush costume, he goes up country to a sheep or cattle station, in order that he may get practical experience of the work on a large run, and acquaint himself at first hand with the thousand-and-one details, a knowledge of which is essential to successful sheep or cattle farming, he is there known as a "jackaroo" or "colonial-experience." He will have to work hard, to ride hard, and to be content with very little society; but his life will be healthy, his food, or "tucker," as it is called, plentiful, while his future is in his own hands. If he devotes himself to his work, and shows aptitude for the business, he will probably not have to wait very long before promotion will lift him out of the state of "jackaroodom."

A man who does odd jobs about a

station and who can be put to any kind of work, is called a "roustabout." "Pikers" are wild cattle; while a "brumby" is a wild horse. A common mode of expression is to be "within cooeey" of a place. Originally, no doubt, this meant to be within the distance at which the well-known "cooeey," or bush-cry, could be heard; now it simply means within easy reach of a place. To be "within cooeey" of Sydney is to be at the distance of an easy journey therefrom.

The small farmers or selectors, both in New South Wales and in Victoria, are looked down upon by the owners of the large runs, and are somewhat contemptuously termed "cockatoo farmers." Some of these despised ones have obtained their holdings by the process known as "jumping a claim." The phrase was first used by the gold-miners. A miner selected a plot of ground upon which to try his luck, and declared his intention to claim or work so much of it, and if he remained a certain time thereon, the claim was his. He "jumped the claim." The expression soon had a wider application. When a man spied some small unclaimed parcel of land, and, squatting thereon, took and kept possession by virtue of having "nine points of the law" on his side, he was said to "jump a claim." The phrase is now applied to the appropriation of many things besides land. It was probably originally an importation from England. In a curious book, abounding in slang, published in 1789, called "Life's Painter of Variegated Characters," by George Parker, the author describes how sharpers, having caught a "greenhorn," "pick him up and take him to the alehouse to jump him," i.e., to rob him by tricks upon the cards. A thief of the present day would talk of "parlour jumping," when he referred to taking things from a sitting-room. The word has become purified of its evil associations in its passage to the southern continent, but the idea of seizure and appropriation is retained.

Log huts are commonly called "shanties," and a curse of the bush-districts of Australia is the "grog-shanty," an institution only too common. A hand employed on a sheep or cattle station, when he receives his periodical cheque from his employer, will often forthwith "make tracks" for the nearest "grog-shanty," and remain there until the whole of his hardly earned pay is consumed in drink.

Should he meet diabolical spirits there, the money will, probably, be soon dissipated

by the process of "shouting." Each man in turn "shouts"—that is to say, stands treat to the rest of the gathering. When the money is gone, the bushman, a sadder if not a wiser man, will return to his work on the station and begin to earn the wherewithal for another such debauch. "Shouting" is a very common colonial expression for standing treat to strangers. A frequent invitation is to take a "long sleeved 'un," that is, a drink from a long pint glass. In the early days of the gold-fever such hospitality was often practised on a very extravagant scale. Many stories, some of which are probably apocryphal, are told of the various means by which lucky diggers would hasten to squander their gold. One man is said to have ordered the whole stock of champagne in a hotel cellar, numbering many score bottles, for which he paid some hundreds of pounds, to be placed in a skittle alley, and at these costly skittles he bowled away until there was not one left unsmashed. It may be noted by the way that "inns" do not exist in Australia, every house of refreshment is a "hotel." It may be only a wooden shanty up country; or it may rise to the dignity of a galvanised iron erection in a small township; or finally it may be a palatial building in a capital city; but the name remains the same.

A native of New South Wales is known as a "cornstalk," because the men generally grow tall and thin. The opposite kind of build, short and thickset, is called "nuggetty." A "gum-sucker" is a native of Tasmania, and owes his elegant nickname to the abundance of gum-trees in the Tasmanian forests. A native of Queensland is a "banana-lander." "Joey" is a familiar name for anything young or small, and is applied indifferently to a puppy, or a kitten, or a child, while a "wood-and-water Joey" is a hanger about hotels, and a doer of odd jobs.

The direct steam communication between San Francisco and Sydney has brought many Americans to seek their fortune in Australia, and with them have come many of the words and phrases characteristic of the speech of Western America. An Australian, like an American, speaks of "making his pile." "I pass," to "give a show," to be "euchred," and other card terms are as common in New South Wales as in California. Another expression is "to play a lone hand." One man will ask another, "Did you go to the theatre last

night!" "Yes." "With whom did you go?" "Oh, no one, I played a lone hand," meaning that he went alone.

A phrase more often heard in the country than in the towns is to "stick up," i.e., to stop and rob. In times gone by, it was by no means an uncommon occurrence for a coach to be "stuck up" by a band of bushrangers, whose shouts of "bail up," an invitation equivalent to our "shell out," supported by revolver barrels, terrified the hearts of the passengers. But a coach is now seldom interfered with, and to "stick up" is applied to less daring attempts to rob. Apart, however, from this meaning, the phrase "stuck up" has a very wide application: A man in any difficulty or trouble, or at a loss for money or other necessary, is said to be "stuck up." An Australian paper, referring to a team of English cricketers, recently wrote: "With only eleven playing members a visiting team can hardly expect to complete an Australian tour without being stuck up at times." "Bushed" is another word that has far outgrown its original signification. "To be bushed," of course, simply meant at first to be lost in the bush; but now it is applied to a person in any mental or physical difficulty or muddle. An Australian says that he is "bushed," just as an Englishman, equally characteristically, declares that he is "fogged." "My word" is an exclamation in constant and universal use.

These specimens of Australian colloquialisms by no means exhaust the popular vocabulary of the Antipodes, which is both large and varied; but a slight acquaintance with some of the commoner words and phrases may be of interest to many others besides "new chums."

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcoates," etc.

CHAPTER XV.

TILLY had occasion to go out on some errand of her own next morning, no doubt an errand of deep feminine importance, since it took her from home soon after breakfast and alone.

She had no longer the unfamiliarity with London which made her first adventure into its mazes a very fearful joy. Already she was getting used to its indifference; and she joyed in the large measure of liberty

which is permitted to the young woman of her generation, who, even if she is pretty, may whisk about alone in hansoms, nobody saying her nay.

She came down the steps, smiling and bright, and calling out smiles in other faces too, even on the face of the calm Behrens, who stood at the entrance meditatively smoking as he had stood that earlier day long ago.

He threw away his cigar and went to greet her.

"You venture out betimes," he said. "You do not wait, like me, till the day is aired."

"I have very important business in hand," she nodded at him. "I think you can help me, Mr. Behrens."

"It will be a pleasure to me if I can."

"Can you tell me of a good place where one can get things for an invalid—nice things; tempting things to eat, for instance? Or—yes, something of that kind would be best to begin with," she mused.

He named one or two places, and she gravely jotted down the addresses in a little book she carried.

Mr. Paul Behrens was leaning against the opening of the hansom which she had entered. He seemed in no haste to remove himself, and he watched her while she wrote.

"I have not had an opportunity of offering my congratulations, Miss Burton," he said; "may I do so now—that is, if I am right in concluding that you are pleased to have found your relations?"

"Of course I am!" she looked up with a little wonder in her clear eyes. "If you had had nobody—nobody young, that is, belonging to you, you would understand how very pleasant a thing it is to have a cousin—two cousins, indeed. Most people have so many relations, and I have so few."

"No doubt, no doubt it is a charming surprise," said he with a sympathy which he did not feel, being, indeed, one of the people who rejoice in an immunity from near relations.

"Perhaps since your uncle is alone this morning, I may take this opportunity of wishing him joy also? If a cousin is a delightful acquisition, what must not a nephew be—the son of a favourite and long-lost sister, as I understand?"

Tilly looked up and flushed under the words. A wonder crossed her mind, as it had crossed it before, whether this man were sneering; but, being herself perfectly

sincere, she quickly dismissed the suspicion.

"He is busy this morning," she said, "and—Mr. Behrens, when one is old, as my uncle is, there is pain as well as pleasure in such a meeting—there is the past in it as well as the present."

She had no past to shadow her happiness, and yet his words brought back all yesterday's sorrowful story, and she took it with her on her way. She was impatiently restless over it. It seemed to her as if it could all have been so easily remedied. As for Mr. Behrens, he returned to the topmost step, and to his cigar and to his smile, the latter a little more pronounced, perhaps, than before. He was still standing there as if he were benignly blessing the throng upon the pavement below, when the bustle of a new arrival attracted his attention. A carriage, drawn by a handsome pair of horses, was driven rapidly to the hotel, and stopped sharply there. The footman, a very gorgeous personage, jumped as agilely as his dignity would allow to the ground, and flung the door wide. Already from his post the watcher could hear the name of "Burton" spoken eagerly, impressively, almost caressingly, and a little lady, too impatient, seemingly, to await the result of enquiry, descended and fluttered up the steps to satisfy herself in person.

"Another relation," said Behrens to himself, as he stood politely aside to allow the be-flowered and be-feathered little figure to pass him; "also a cousin, or possibly an aunt. Paul Behrens, you must look to your friendship; you must not allow this charming sentiment to languish—to be buried under an avalanche of cousins. Where the carcase is, there will the vultures gather."

The lady who called out this inelegant simile was no other than Mrs. Popham; and if it were necessary to liken her to a bird, she might more aptly have been illustrated by an owl unused to daylight, as she came blinking and stumbling up the steps, turning her eager, short-sighted eyes here and there as if she expected to find Tilly and her uncle camped in the enjoyment of the December rigours on the doorstep.

In her blind haste she swerved against Mr. Behrens, and recovered herself with a start.

"I beg your pardon," she said, and then catching at the first possible chance of information, she asked:

"Can you tell me if Mr. Burton lives here?"

"A Mr. Burton certainly lives here."

"And his niece?"

"And Miss Burton, also."

"It must be my Burtons!" cried Mrs. Popham, clasping her hands, as if she would restrain the eagerness of her soul. Then as she read his unresponsive face, a sudden doubt clouded her joy.

"Perhaps they are not at home!" she faltered.

"Miss Burton is not at home, but her uncle is, I believe."

"You are a friend of theirs?"

"I have that honour. May I have the pleasure of taking you to Mr. Burton?"

She accepted so readily that she hardly waited for him to swing the glass door wide; she almost tripped him up in the corridor; she blundered at the turning—so much eagerness had surely never before been imprisoned in so small a body.

"This is ironical, Paul," said the grave Behrens, addressing himself after an old habit, "that you should be the instrument of still further disturbing the placid flow of your friendship. This poor creature must be a sister, at the least. Had our dear Burton another sister besides the lost one, for whose son the feast was spread last night? What faithful creatures sisters are—to brothers who have succeeded!"

The cynic would fain have witnessed the interview, had that been possible; but he could do no more than usher the lady into the room where Uncle Bob sat writing. There was no joy depicted on the face Uncle Bob lifted from the letter over which he laboured; there was only extreme surprise, and something of annoyance and astonishment at the interruption.

As for Mrs. Popham, she waited for no invitation, for no preliminaries; she took him by assault. Before her guide could close the door upon her enthusiasm, he heard its first overflowings as she ran forwards, both thin hands outstretched.

"I have found you. I have found you at last!" she cried. "Only this morning by the nine o'clock post, the second post, did I hear your address and I came at once; I did not even wait to put on gloves—to change my gown. 'Let me go as I am!' I cried. 'Let me not lose another moment before seeing my dearest Tilly and her uncle!'"

Behrens softly shut the door and withdrew.

"She might have lingered to put on

gloves—even ten-button gloves, and another frock—a frock of state. Our good Burton's patience would have consented to the most prolonged toilet. He could very well have waited, this good man, for the interview. Perhaps some day he will even envy you, Paul: you who have neither father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nor cousin, to love you when a stroke of luck comes your way."

When Tilly came home two hours later, radiant with her morning's work, and laden with packages, she paused of a sudden in the middle of the room, arrested there by the appearance of her uncle, as he lay huddled in one of the crimson velvet chairs.

"What is it?" she cried, her mind darting over all sorts of possibilities, haunted still by that disaster of long ago. "Has anything happened since I went away?"

"Anything happened?" said Uncle Bob with a groan, turning himself in his chair. "Everything has happened. You woman, my lass, beats everything."

"Oh—a woman," said Tilly, laughing with relief. "Now I can breathe again. A woman—and what has this woman done to you, and how is it that you look so—so——?" She surveyed him doubtfully.

Uncle Bob looked indeed a trifle awed, and perhaps furtively ashamed of himself, and perhaps, also, the more ready to assert himself, if an old gentleman with a very red face and an exhausted air can be said to look all these contradictory things.

"Out with it," said Tilly judicially. "You have something to 'fess.' I know it by your eye; you won't look at me. What naughty thing have you done since I last saw you?"

"Done!" he exploded in sudden wrath, "I haven't done a hand's turn. I've sat here and I've listened. I haven't got in a word edgeways. For the gift of the gab, my dear, there never was her equal, and I've known something of the length of women's tongues in my day."

"You haven't told me who she is," interrupted Tilly.

"And a precious time it was before I knew, though to hear her, you would think I was, next to you, her dearest friend—a woman I never set eyes on till this day."

"A friend of mine?"

"Ay, a friend of yours!" cried Uncle Bob, seizing his advantage; "of yours, not mine, my lass. I want none of your

weathercocks, shutting the door in our faces one day, and crying out that she couldn't live without us the next. 'Mem,' I said to her, when she pulled up to draw breath, 'we got our dinner, Tilly and me, though you didn't so much as ask us to take pot-luck with you; and we got rooms—pretty snug quarters as you'll see if you just cast your eye round; and as for friends—we've found some very much to our liking, and we're getting along pretty comfortably, and there's nothing I could name that we're in want of just at present.'"

"So Mrs. Popham has found us out," said Tilly, looking less surprised than he expected, and a trifle displeased. "I think Mr. Temple need not have been in such a hurry to betray us."

"Temple? What has he to do with it? It was your cousin Spencer, the meddling body, that sent her our direction. If Temple had done it——" He waved his hand in token of the menace that would have threatened that rash youth.

Tilly laughed as she went up and put her hand on his shoulder, and perched herself on the arm of his chair.

"You have given in," she said, "my dear diplomatist, you needn't pretend any more; you can't deceive me. You have forgiven Mrs. Popham, and after all, according to this same Mr. Temple, there was nothing to forgive. You've taken her back into favour. I shouldn't wonder if you've even consented to eat the dinner that was refused on the night of our arrival."

Uncle Bob's surrender had been even more abject and complete than she dreamed. He had pledged his presence, and that of Tilly, at—how many!—he was afraid to sum up the number of conciliatory feasts; the salt of a renewed peace was to savour an alarming succession of banquets, according to his confused memory.

"My dear," he said falteringly and with downward looks, "when a woman comes—a woman, you see, and a widow——"

Why the fact of Mrs. Popham's being a widow should complicate the matter, Tilly did not know, and neither apparently did the speaker, for he came to a precipitate pause.

"When charming woman stoops to apologise," said Tilly gaily, "what can a poor man do, but surrender? I believe it was you that did the repenting after all, in spite of that dreadful snub you administered. Perhaps you repented of that, too? I

believe you even promised that I should eat that dinner."

"It will be a very good dinner. She told me who were to be at it. Quite a lot of swells. Ah, that's what you may call society, my lass!" cried Uncle Bob, his elation peeping out now that his confession was made. "She is coming to see you, Tilly. She was here for a matter of two hours. Bless me! how the woman's tongue did wag!" he tried to snatch at a remnant of his grievance. "She couldn't stop any longer, but she is coming to see you this afternoon."

"Oh, this afternoon! Two visits from Mrs. Popham in one day! We mustn't be too uplifted," said the girl demurely; "we must try not to be proud; we must remember our station in life, when we come to be invited to meet the great."

"Fiddlesticks," growled Uncle Bob. "You're as good as them any day. And Tilly," he hid his embarrassment under an affectation of dissatisfaction, "you'll put on another rig-out." He examined her with struggling criticism. "What's the good of being rich if that's all ye can show for it?"

"Oh, I will make a toilet," she laughed. "I will put on my 'braws.' A second visit from Mrs. Popham in one day is worth that."

She stooped over him and kissed him. His simple vanity, so easily stirred into life, always touched her to a greater tenderness. At these times their positions seemed to be reversed, and it was she who took care of him, who loyally shielded him in her thoughts from so much as a shadow of criticism. Love does not blind, as it is a fashion with us to believe; it does not blind, but it makes allowance easy. Without thinking about it, without once sitting down to study or analyse his character, Tilly unconsciously knew all about her uncle; knew the facile weakness of his nature; the foolish, easily gratified, lightly swayed feelings; the impulses that led him hither and thither at any beck or call; the sound, kind heart that was his safest guide. She knew that she reigned there supreme, but she put his love for her to no base end; she used it rather to lift him up; always to put him in the kindest light, to make him seen at his worthiest. It would go hard indeed with anyone who should despise this kindest uncle in her presence; and those two hours which Mrs. Popham had spent in his society, lifted that fickle lady at once many degrees in her estima-

tion, and made the afternoon interview easy.

It might be supposed that Uncle Bob had had enough of his talkative visitor for one day, and yet, as the hour of her arrival approached, he was found hovering about the sitting-room, pushing the furniture into new combinations, and making blundering suggestions and amendments.

"Why hadn't Tilly put on a silk gown! Any old wife in Lilliesmuir might wear a stuff gown; if that was what she called a toilet, he didn't think much of it, and where were the pearls he had given her! Mrs. Popham would think that trumpery brooch was all she had to wear."

He was somewhat mollified when she came back to him, presently, in a smart tea-gown, all falling lace and ribbons, and she carried the cases containing the pearls in her hands.

"I've brought these to show her," she said, "though she doesn't need to be told, now-a-days, what an extravagant old uncle I have. I'd have brought the turquoises, too, but it would have been too cruel to stir Mrs. Popham's envy. Oh, yes; we'll have tea, I think. She will like that best."

For Uncle Bob was now suggesting what is called, in aldermanic phrase, a banquet of cake and wine. In Lilliesmuir exhausted nature had always to be sustained on a round of visits by port or sherry, served in massive cut decanters, each bearing the name of its contents on a silver label hung round its neck, to dissipate any doubts one might entertain as to the vintage. The wine—generally reposing with an air of accident on a side table—was always accompanied by cake presented in a heavy silver basket disinterred for such occasions, and by shortbread or bun, according to the season.

Do ladies, wearing their best bonnets and their best manners, still sip that fiery "sherry-wine" as if they liked it, and still wrestle politely with the hard, white sweets and the orange-peel that stud the generous portions of Pitcaithley bannocks, as if they liked these too? Or has custom yielded even in these remote outworks, before all-insidious fashion?

Uncle Bob thought very little of the hospitality that expresses itself in the offer of a "wishy-washy cup of tea—a poor wa' tea, where you had to hold the cup in your hand, and couldn't eat anything better than a biscuit for fear of soiling your gloves;" but he yielded

before the array of facts Tilly brought to bear on him. What "everybody" did—that to which Mrs. Popham was used—was, of course, the right thing; and so that erring and repentant lady was received with all honour, with open arms, and embraces, and libations.

Perhaps it was that Tilly knew a little more—perhaps it was that she expected a little less than two months before; but she felt that her attitude towards Mrs. Popham was changed from that old one that belonged to Liliesmuir.

Mrs. Popham, in spite of her fervencies, her exclamations, her extravagances, subtly felt it too.

"You are different," she said, half wistfully, throwing her sharp chin back and looking at Tilly. "You are more beautiful than ever; but you are—you are—"

"Perhaps a trifle less rustic," said Tilly modestly. "I hope you don't find me grown too worldly, as Cousin Spencer is always fearing."

"My dear, you will never be that," said Mrs. Popham with solemn conviction.

"I don't know," smiled Tilly, "I run some risk, if you ask me to so many parties."

"But you will come!" cried the irrepressible Mrs. Popham, "since you won't come to live with me, you will at least do this! Your uncle has promised. I'm so proud, so glad! The Trumpingtons are coming—they put off another engagement to meet you. Lady Kensington is wild because I didn't ask her; she would give anything to worm herself in. Lady Craven—oh, that's for lunch, two o'clock Saturday—Lady Craven says she must positively have you all to herself. She won't share you with anybody. Dearest Tilly, you won't forget! You will remember all the days! I have written them down. And you won't let your dear uncle forget! Men do forget, you know. I always kept a little note-book of all Mr. Popham's engagements, and repeated them to him every day at breakfast. He used to say in his droll way that I was worse than an avenging conscience. Men say such queer things! Now, dearest, you won't disappoint me!"

"Oh, no," said Tilly, "we will come and be looked at. I suppose they will expect my uncle to wear a kilt, and speak broken English; and as for me, must I wear Rob Roy tartan and cairngorms, and

sing Jacobite songs! I haven't any cairngorms, and I never sing, except just to my uncle alone, and neither of us can speak a word of Gaelic. I won't forget," she said, her voice softening as she read the puzzled anxiety on Mrs. Popham's puckered face. "I will write all our engagements down in a little book I have. I only meant," she ended with a smile, "that I hope your friends won't be disappointed if they find us somewhat like other people."

"You can never be like other people," Mrs. Popham rushed at her and embraced her once more. "Other people can never be so beautiful."

Yes, it was not quite the same as it would have been, had Prince's Gate taken them to its shelter on that night long ago. Tilly had felt her wings since then; she was still a country girl, but she knew her power. She knew that she was very fair to see, and she knew—valuing this the more—that where others had succeeded she could hold her place; and was there not a hint, a savour of bad taste, of patronage, in this offered hospitality?

But she put that thought from her very soon. She was wholesomely glad to be reconciled to her former friend; it was always ill with her, when her little world was out of joint.

The only person who was displeased with this new turn of affairs was Fred Temple. To go with a great piece of news, and to find your tidings forestalled—the news snatched from your very lips, as it were, is never a pleasant experience; and it was Fred's, when he went intending to overwhelm Mrs. Popham with joy and gratitude. And, behold! she knew it all already, and had seen Tilly, and had engaged her for ever so many evenings deep, and she had not so much as a word of thanks to spare him for all the anxieties he had shared.

It was he who was to have found the Burtons, and it was John who was their real discoverer. It was John who was their kinsman; and, now, even the poor satisfaction of restoring them to Mrs. Popham was denied him. He was hardly even mollified by the invitation to dine, which was extended to him also. He had meant to be the chief personage, and it was but a super's part that was left him to play.

The white heather had brought him no special luck yet, but its day was to come.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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GRETCHEN.

*By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Concell,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.*

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER III.—"THE PITY OF IT."

AS the mists of anger, jealousy, and wounded pride cleared away slowly and gradually from Alexis Kenyon's brain, she woke suddenly to the memory that Adrian Lyle had apparently not yet learned the tragic sequel to the story which she had heard from Bari.

He had spoken of Gretchen's fate as still unknown, and had hinted that she might even be desperate enough to present herself at the Abbey. The thought brought the blood to her face in a sudden tide of indignation and yet of fear.

She knew well enough that truth had spoken in every line of Adrian Lyle's face, in every ring of the deep and passion-filled voice. She knew now equally well that Bari had lied—that Neale's weak and yielding nature was alone responsible for this catastrophe, and that on his head the blame must lie. But her keen eyes had read the truth of that one assertion, which she had hurled at Adrian Lyle so contemptuously; she felt that he loved this girl, that her fate meant to him his life's weal or woe; and that knowledge stung her pride and self-sufficiency to the very core.

When she raised herself from the white furs on which she had thrown herself in the first agony and shame of her wounded heart, her face looked ghastly and almost terrible. She began to pace the room to and fro like a caged creature in its den. The delicate lace handkerchief

she held in her hand was rent and bitten into a thousand fragments. It was the only outlet she had dared allow the hysterical passions which had threatened to overwhelm her.

Again and again she told herself that she despised Neale Kenyon, that she hated Adrian Lyle; but one thing she scarcely dared even whisper, and that was the fierce, unholy joy which the knowledge of her rival's shame and suffering brought with its every recollection. Her rival! It was humiliating, but it was true—her rival in the affections of the only two men, whom she had ever permitted to hope for favour or regard!

She, who had so prided herself on her power; who had smiled with such unmoved serenity on the follies and passions of men, she was rivalled now by the mere youth and beauty of this low-born German girl of whose very name she was ignorant!

The thought seemed incredible, and for a time she could scarcely realise its truth.

The shame and disgust, which she had always felt for the intrigues of men, overwhelmed her now with a sense of personal affront and of outraged dignity.

Neale might have done what he liked so long as the knowledge of his actions had not offended her taste, or affected her personally. But he had blundered in the most helpless fashion; he had been capable of the stupidity of giving his own name to be used against him; and he had also committed that last and crowning folly—trusting an inferior, and lying to a rival.

Her rage was less bitter than her contempt for the miserable blunderer to whom she had promised herself. Surely he might have had the decency to keep the girl in her own land; to fence the matter off with some sure barriers; not to leave all to the

mercy of chance and the zealous watchfulness of the man whom he had deceived.

Adrian Lyle's words echoed in her ears with strange persistence. The matter would not rest now, she felt assured. If what Bari had told her was true, the whole country would ring with the scandal, and Adrian Lyle's testimony would be weighty indeed.

At this point of her reflections she rang the bell to summon her maid, and asked whether her father had returned. The girl answered that Sir Roy had just come in, and was in the library.

Alexis asked no more, but went straight down to the room in question, and entered it as unceremoniously as usual. The first glance at her father's face told her he had heard the news. Someone had been before-hand with her.

She stopped abruptly:

"You—you know!" she faltered, touched and vaguely alarmed by the haggard misery of his face. "Who told you?"

"Bari," he said. Then he held out his arms to her; his eyes softened with the idolising tenderness of the love which she had so sorely tried, yet had never found wanting. "Oh, my poor child!" he said, "my poor child!"

These words touched the girl's proud heart, as nothing else could have touched it in that moment when all that was worst in her nature had asserted its power. For a moment she stood before him erect, haughty, defiant; but then the weakness of womanhood asserted itself; she shuddered from head to foot; great tears sprang to her eyes, and she hid her face on that fond and faithful heart, sobbing like a wearied child.

"We must do something," said Sir Roy, at last.

That sudden and unusual storm of weeping had exhausted the girl's strength. She lay back in her chair, white and fragile as a lily. No one, looking at her, would have credited her with the force and fury of the passions which had raged within her breast an hour before.

At her father's words she looked up inquiringly.

"What can we do?" she said. "There is the scandal—the shame—how can they be avoided now?"

"If it is true," said Sir Roy, "if the girl really is in prison, I have made up my mind to go and see her. For the honour of common humanity she must be saved, if it is possible to save her."

"You will go and see her?" echoed Alexis, looking with strange and incredulous eyes at his face.

"I must," said Sir Roy. "Keenly as I feel the disgrace, the girl is perhaps less to blame than we imagine. As for Neale's share in the business, Bari has so complicated and mixed it up with Mr. Lyle's that I find it hard to make out who is the most guilty. You have heard, of course, that Lyle has left here?"

"I heard it," she said, growing very pale, "from himself."

"From himself! Do you mean to say he has had the audacity to enter this house—to ask for you——"

She made a gesture of impatience.

"What does it matter?" she said. "He asked for you, but you were out. I—I had a natural curiosity to find out whether his version of the story tallied with Bari's, so—I saw him."

"And what did he say?" demanded Sir Roy, his brow growing stormy once again.

"He painted Neale in very black colours. For my part, I thought the story very weak, and I told him that I should wait for Neale's version before believing him."

"But Neale is bound hand and foot out in Madras," exclaimed Sir Roy. "He can't possibly come home, and the trial will be on at once—next week, I believe."

"So soon," faltered the girl. "Can't it be postponed, or evaded? You have influence, wealth——"

"Not enough to buy justice," said her father with a bitter smile. "Things must take their course, you know. Bari told you her crime?"

"Yes," she said, a faint spot of colour coming in either cheek. "Is it true?"

"That I cannot say until I see her. But I fear it is only too probable."

"Why should she have done such a thing?" demanded Alexis. "There was nothing to be gained. She must have been mad, or——"

She stopped abruptly. Adrian Lyle's picture of the distraught, frenzied girl learning, for the first time, her betrayal and ruin, rose before her eyes. Surely here was confirmation enough of the tale he had told, and not only confirmation, but reason for the rash action which had suddenly overwhelmed so many lives in black and bitter shame.

"Perhaps," said Sir Roy, "she was mad. I pray to Heaven that she may have been. The guilt would be less terrible, though not the disgrace. That can never

be wiped out if once our good name becomes public property."

He looked at his daughter as he spoke. To his amazement she was leaning back in her chair white and still as marble.

He sprang to his feet, and rang violently for assistance.

In all his experience of Alexis, he had never known her faint.

"Good Heaven!" he cried to himself in terror, as he watched her women's efforts to restore her. "Is it possible that she cared so much for Neale after all? . . . And now, oh! the pity of it—the pity of it!"

CHAPTER IV.

"THROUGH BITTER WATERS."

A SOLITARY figure was pacing up and down the little lawn of Gretchen's English home, in the chill, gray morning light.

The wind swept coldly over the trees; the sky was overcast and sad. To and fro, with hurried steps the figure paced; its black draperies sweeping the dry and rustling leaves that had fluttered earthwards; the face turned in dread and expectation to the little gate beyond. Suddenly it swung open, and a man entered. The figure stood still under the bare, dim trees, then made a step forward, looked, and shrank back, while all of life or feeling in the marble face lived only in the fevered questioning of the eyes.

For a second, face looked back to face—no word was uttered. Then the man's lips broke the chain of silence: "Have you found her?" he asked breathlessly; and the eager beating of his heart seemed to outrace his speech.

No answer.

"For Heaven's sake, speak," he cried hoarsely. "You have heard something. What is it? The worst is better than suspense."

"The worst?" fell slowly, brokenly, in that dull, changed voice. "It is the worst. Have you not heard?"

"I have heard nothing—would I be here else? What is it? Is she dead?"

The face he questioned was hidden from his sight; all self-control swept away in the bitter agony of such shame and such remorse, as never had his wildest fancy pictured.

"Dead! No. Heaven is less merciful than death!"

"Not dead?" There was relief, keen as joy, in the hoarsely whispered words. "Then, what has happened?"

"She is in prison—on a charge of murdering her child."

He fell back a step, his face drawn and ghastly as the dead. Slowly, distinctly, with clearness not to be gainsaid, had the words come to his ears. He could not doubt, he could not question. The whole force and horror of his own fears had never yet suggested to him such a possibility as this; but now he marvelled that they had not done so.

Maddened with shame and terror; burdened with misery too great to bear; could he wonder that despair had overthrown her reason, and left her at the mercy of the first mad impulse which had fired the poor distraught brain?

The terrible silence lasted but a brief space, though its agony might have crowded years.

The woman spoke again. "I did not believe it at first. I could not. Only last night I heard that she was in prison; then a man, some labouring man who knew her by sight, brought the news here. I only waited for the daylight to go to her. He told me the place, where they have taken her. I wrote it down for fear I might forget."

She took a folded paper from the bosom of her dress, and gave it to Adrian Lyle. He gazed at it blankly, stupidly, trying vaguely to connect it with the young, fair springtide of that wrecked and shattered life. She, so pure, so lovely, shrined in his heart as its most exquisite memory! she an accused criminal—condemned to the disgrace, the hardships of a prison cell!

He groaned aloud. Then suddenly he turned away, and began to walk mechanically down the path.

A voice stayed him. "Where are you going; not to her?"

"Yes," he said. "Where else?"

"Then take me with you. I must see her too; my coldness and cruelty drove her forth; on my head be the blame."

Adrian Lyle looked coldly at the agonised face. "On your head it may be," he said; "but that plea will not save her now."

Then his voice broke, a passion of fear, of terror, shook from him the remainder of his self-control.

"Oh, to think of it," he groaned. "A little kindness, a word of sympathy; and she would be here now, safe, sheltered, even if unhappy."

"Don't reproach me," said his companion, and a sob burst from her tortured heart. "My cup is full enough. Only take me to

side; let me sob my secret and my woe at her feet; and then—I will pray even for death.”

He was silent for a moment, wrestling with his bitter thoughts of anger and of me. The pitiless hardness of this man's nature had been the first lever which Fate had used to turn poor innocent Stephen to her doom. That same harshness and rigour had driven her forth, in man's greatest need and agony, to face desolate future. He held it responsible for this new misfortune, and he felt the woman beside him dialike so at, contempt so bitter, that no harder he could have been his than the one which she set before him in the light of duty and of duty. But, putting self aside, he mastered his own repugnance, turning to her with grave and cold politeness:

“I am at your service,” he said.

A dull, wide street in a dull, murky town; yet a busy town withal it seemed. Adrian Lyle, as he drove through it with that silent figure by his side. She had only looked up once as the carriage took its way, among noise and clamour, and jostling vehicles and harsh voices, and all the bustle and confusion of busy life:

“Is it here?” she had asked, and Adrian had simply bent his head. Speech would not come, nor did she seem to expect

The depth of a mutual sorrow, the shadow of a mutual dread, these were all they had in common—a bond of union in the darkest hour that either life had known.

As the carriage rattled and jolted over uneven streets, it passed a black and ruinous edifice, at sight of which Adrian involuntarily shrank back with paling face; and sudden horror-filled eyes.

“Heaven!” his heart cried, “to think that she should be there—she——!”

They reached the hotel to which he had selected the man to take them, and he got out; and secured rooms, and gave orders for the companion's comfort; and all the while the aching of his heart grew wilder and more fierce with every throb that spoke of mute despair.

The noon was scarcely past. There was ample time for him to fulfil his promise. Mechanically he took his way more through the streets, and to that place of horror from whence his shuddering had sank back in mortal dread.

Learning the hour at which the prisoner might be seen, and learning, too, that his

profession gave him some privilege of frequent admission, he went back again to the hotel, true to his promise to Anna von Waldstein.

“At four o'clock,” he said, “you may see her.”

The white face, almost awful in its intensity of repressed suffering, looked up at him with sudden gratitude.

“You have been very generous,” she faltered. “I will only ask one favour more at your hands. Be present at the interview. I have that to say which it is best for you to hear, you, the only true friend this poor forsaken child has ever known. Will you promise?”

There seemed in Adrian Lyle's heart no further place for surprise or suffering left. All of misery and mischance that could fill one man's life had surely filled his own. Yet he looked at the beautiful, suffering face with involuntary compassion; he gave her once again the courteous assent, but with that difficulty and distaste which marked it as an obligation and a duty.

“Yes,” he said. “I promise.”

A CRETAN MONASTERY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

BEFORE ever I had set foot in the monastery of the Hagia Triadha (the Holy Trinity), I was on nodding terms with three of the good papás, or priests, of the monastery. I had met them at odd times in the stony lane between the old olive woods outside Khalepa; or, toiling over the heated rocks in the dry bed of a mountain torrent, which had to be crossed on the way to the Akrotiri peninsula, the site of the monastery; or in the filthy but interesting streets of Khania, the capital of Crete, where they had evidently been doing a little marketing on behalf of the monastery.

There was the Papá Theodosios, the Papá Elias, and the Papá Constantinos. At a distance they were as indistinguishable from each other as three crows. But time had taught me that the Papá Theodosios was the one who sat on the monastery mule more like an old woman than a man; that the Papá Constantinos hummed fragments of the Liturgy while he travelled, and kept time with his head and beard; and that the Papá Elias had a temper of his own, which the mule, by its gait and the twitching of its ears, showed that it never altogether forgot. For the

further identification of the Papá Constantinos, I had remarked that his long hair was frequently coming undone, thanks to the energy of his musical jogging, and he was to be seen twisting it again into a pig-tail and thrusting it under his tall, clerical, chimney-pot hat.

Once or twice I had smiled at the papás: they had so funny an appearance in the midst of the strings of fish, bags of rice, coffee, sugar, and so on, which composed their marketings; and they had smiled back, instead of taking my mild merriment amiss. This cemented our friendship, though we had never said more than a "kali méra" (good morning), or "kali spéra" (good evening) to each other. And it was, therefore, with peculiar pleasure that I prepared to pay the monastery of Hagia Triadha a visit, which would enable me to see the three good men and their seventeen or eighteen brother monks at home.

The monastery stands at the foot of some mountains of eccentric colour, near the northern extremity of the Akrotiri promontory. A glance at the map of Crete will show this big promontory at once. It is the third from the west, and runs north-east with the shape of a tadpole. It is a plateau some ten miles by seven, terminated by a range of mountains, the red soil of which glows from the gray rock with an effect surprisingly beautiful. Looking east, one may see Mount Ida soaring eight thousand feet into the air, sixty miles away; while south is the superb mass of Crete's White Mountains, as lofty as Ida, the very tops of them being not more than eight miles from the neck of the peninsula. The surface of Akrotiri is, for the most part, rough and stony; but its sweet-smelling herbs and flowers save it from the charge of bareness. It has also olive woods, almond and fig trees, caroubs, and many a vineyard and corn patch; in the midst of which are the thirteen white villages which it claims to support. In spite of appearances, therefore, it cannot be so very barren. The bees love Akrotiri. Its air, moreover, is the finest in the world.

To reach the monastery, we had to walk the whole length of this promontory. But, with a speckless blue sky overhead; on the one hand as blue a sea, beyond which the lesser mountains of Western Crete became a soft purple against the horizon; on the other hand, the country in its spring garniture, and the snow mountains behind so dazzling under the southern sun, that the eye quailed before them—under such

conditions, the walk could not but be a pleasure.

My dragoman was with me in his best clothes, for it was Sunday. His legs, to the knees, were cased in a bright blue pair of bag-trousers. He wore yellow leather top-boots, notable for the uniformity of the level of their soles. His jacket, over a lavender-coloured vest slashed with silver embroidery, was of the sleekest navy-blue cloth, and short, like the coat of a small public-school boy. Round his waist was a crimson sash folded three or four times, in which he kept his Cretan dagger, the white ivory handle beautified by a sham emerald stuck in its midst. To complete his attire, which was characteristic of his country, he wore a large loose fez (distinct from the tight-fitting Turkish kind), which, with its long black tassel, swept his shoulder while he walked. Michaelis was a very worthy Cretan, and not above mortifying himself in Lent by such a warm walk in the sun as ours promised to be. But he had a poor idea of the larder of the Hagia Triadha, and, out of consideration for me, had before starting crammed his breeches' pockets with slices of white wheaten bread.

We skirted two of the Akrotiri's thirteen villages on our way. Cool and refreshing to the eye though they seemed at a distance of a stone's throw, we found them veritable heaps of ruins when we entered them. From broken doorways and big rents in the walls of the low, flat-roofed buildings, sallow and dirty faces peeped out at us; the men continued to stare when they saw a European, but the women quickly drew back, or stood stiff and still behind this or that protecting wall, whence they could peer at discretion. Yellow curs snapped at our heels through each of these settlements, and for a long time afterwards we could hear their concerts of dissatisfied barks and howls. These villages were wrapped in green foliage, and intersected with vineyards of superb red earth. The nopals or prickly pears were ten or twelve feet high. Tufts of gigantic aloes grew by the walls which bordered our track, and over the hot stones of which iridescent lizards sped out of our way into their crannies. Fig trees spring luxuriantly from the ruins, as if human refuse and stones one upon another were their most congenial soil. It was the year for the olive crop, and the gnarled orchards promised a splendid harvest. As for the almond trees which lined our way, their

fruit was already fast ripening, and many a young kernel found its way into Michaelis's stomach. The atmosphere, moreover, was heavy with the perfume of blossoming orange and lemon trees, and the more familiar pear and quince.

Everywhere in Crete one sees signs of the wars which for more than a century have periodically broken out between the Cretans and their rulers. The Turks have often found themselves impotent to quell these insurrections; and in revenge, they have swept like a scourge through the land, levelling buildings, cutting throats, and shearing the olive trees from off the face of the earth. Marks of the devastation of '69 are still to be seen. Bare walls now stand where formerly were populous monasteries or villages; cannon balls are the toys of the children, who little know their significance; and large tracts of country are but just recovering their value, after seventeen years of slow progress. I asked my dragoman about a certain white block-house to the left of us, standing on high ground by a blue inlet of the sea. "It is the castle of a Moslem, may the devil take him!" was his reply; and he drew his right hand across his throat very expressively. Michaelis had a wife, one daughter, and four boys. Ordinarily, he and his family professed a fine contempt for the Mussulmans; they had friends in Apokorona, a hill retreat; and thither, at the first signal of a new insurrection, to their friends they would run with all speed. But on this occasion Michaelis forgot himself so far as to give the ruling race their proper tribute of respectful hatred.

In the third hour of our walk we reached the estates of the Hagia Triadha. For a quarter of an hour we trod the soft turf of the monastery olive wood, and then there uprose before us an avenue of noble cypresses. The white steps, portico, and dome of the monastery were seen at the end of the avenue. Behind it, affording complete shelter from the north, the Akrotiri mountains raised their great mottled shoulders, thickly overgrown with oleander, arbutus, wild thyme, and mint, and many another shrub and herb. On either side of us were the gardens of the monastery, fertile, and full of blossom; and the buzzing of myriads of bees over the honeyed flowers came to us like the sound of a distant organ. The gleaming snow mountains, from which by this we were separated fully fifteen miles, appeared no further than at first, and the lustre from

their resplendent summits seemed to flood the plateau with a clear white light, which was merely warmed and mellowed by the sun. A place of such tranquillity and "sweet monotony," that in it a man might well wish to live and die!

"The 'monasterio'!" murmured Michaelis. He bent his head under a faded fresco of the Madonna, which filled the pediment of the porch, and then, whispering reverently, led me through the cloisters into the inner quadrangle, on the opposite side of which the Church of the "Hagia Triadha" stood open for us.

The building was white-washed in every part, from the cloister columns to the dome in front of us, and the single fat blackened chimney on one side, which betokened the neighbourhood of the monastery kitchen. In the quadrangle was a little fountain of spring water, and by it were half-a-dozen great orange trees covered with fruit. The blue sky seemed a fitting canopy for the whole.

A caloyer of the monastery, with brown bare legs, met us in the court-yard. The "caloyer" is a lay monk attached to an establishment. He is a sworn celibate; he never cuts his hair, and he lives and works on the conventual estate; otherwise he differs in no respect from an ordinary peasant. There are few caloyers in Crete nowadays. Their place is taken by the hired labourers, who occupy the hovels which frequently surround the monasteries, but who cut their hair and marry like the majority of men.

At the sight of a stranger, this caloyer was struck with astonishment; but a few words of explanation sent him speeding down the cloisters in quest of the Hegumenos. Then, producing from his spacious breeches a rosary of yellow beads, Michaelis bade me follow him into the refectory of the monastery.

This was a long, lofty room opening from the cloisters, with a row of tall windows facing the White Mountains. A couple of bookcases stood at one end of the room, and herein was the conventual library in such a state of decay and disorder that it was immediately apparent how little the papas cared for literature. There were the works of Athanasius and Chrysostom in many volumes; and alongside was a part, though choice, copy of Catullus! Virgil's *Æneid*, many copies of the Greek Bible in different editions, a book of French Travels, and an odd volume of Plutarch's *Lives* formed another row, the association of

which was similarly disastrous. Each book-case, however, was secured from further profanation by a strong brass padlock. As a matter of fact, the good papás had allowed their eyes to become so disused to printed letters, that they could hardly tell one book from another. A blue and gold picture of the Madonna adorned the wall by the books. At the other end of the room was a photograph of the Duke of Edinburgh in the midst of his ship's company, presented to the monastery by the Duke himself.

But Michaelis had only just time to run through his beads when we heard a noise of shuffling feet outside on the flags, and the next moment in bustled the Papá Constantinos and the Papá Elias, accompanied by a third papá. My two friends paused for a moment, then uttered an exclamation of pleasure, laid their hands upon their hearts, bowed several times, and stood blushing. Then, both together, they began a hurried address of welcome, which was wholly unintelligible to me.

Nor was the third papá at the outset less civil in his demonstrations; but when he ascertained that we three were old acquaintances he drew back, and sat with folded arms, a little glumly. He was a fat, round-faced man about fifty, and rather short, and, as soon as the Papá Elias had finished speaking to me, he seemed to tax him with something in so querulous a tone that, knowing the Papá Elias's temper, I feared a quarrel might ensue. It came to nothing serious, however. The Papá Elias left the room, and returned with a tray of "Turkish delight" and six glasses of raki. Behind him, as accessories to our company, came in a young serving papá, his face ablaze with curiosity, and a monastery boy in a blue cotton smock, not a whit less excited. There were six glasses of liquor; the Hegúmenos himself was to make the sixth of our convivial party.

All the four papás were in their home clothes, if I may use the expression. Their cassocks were threadbare, the nap was worn off their brown velvet pants in patches, and their jack-boots were grimed as if they had been turning the clods that very morning. On their heads, instead of the stately chimney-pot hats, they wore small black caps; and this, and their general garb, and their knotted hair, made one think of them as so many Portias playing the part of men, though their beards were long enough in all conscience. But when the Papá Elias began to fidget

and bite his nails, I could not help seeing that he was not accustomed to wash himself with the zeal of an English ecclesiastic: his fingers and hands were very grimy indeed.

And now having drunk each other's healths in the fiery raki, we talked and smoked for a spell. The Papá Constantinos was a very deft maker of cigarettes, and very generous. I tried to dissuade him from pressing so many upon me; but he made me understand that it was the monastery tobacco, and that I might smoke the big jar empty if I pleased—there was plenty more. One by one other papás—each with a quaint personality of his own—came and joined us. Then certain old gentlemen, dressed like jaunty brigands, slipped noiselessly round the threshold, their faces wreathed in vacuous smiles, and also took places on the divans. In short, some twenty minutes after our arrival, we were the cynosure of a throng of twenty chatters, lay and apostolic. Michaelis kept passing his beads through his fingers all the time he talked; but though very proud of his conspicuousness and importance, he was not forgetful of me, his charge. After a time he saw that I was in need of something.

"What is it?" he asked.

But, with all the score of them eagerly waiting for my reply, I found that I could not express my wants: the Greek for "dinner" had suddenly dropped from my vocabulary.

It must be understood that in Crete a monastery, like an English inn, is free to all comers. There was nothing, therefore, indecorous in the expression of my hunger, if only I could have expressed it decorously. During Lent a Greek will go all the day on a few olives, a piece of brown bread, and a drink of wine, but I was not yet sufficiently acclimatised for that.

In the heat of this dilemma an idea illumined the face of the servitor. He said something, and rushed to the cupboard by the Duke of Edinburgh's photograph. Here, from a medley of cups, platters, church furniture, and picture-books, he drew forth an old French Grammar "for the use of the Greek youth." And, consequent upon this, it was highly amusing to see his triumph, and that of the entire community when, between us, we made out my meaning from the book. In a moment four or five of the older papás had laid hands on the Grammar, and were sighing and venting

monosyllables of wonder like so many washerwomen with a little piece of fabulous news and their cups of tea. At every fresh page they made a discovery, and their excitement increased.

This contagion of absurd enthusiasm caught every one in the room except the papá who had first appeared with the Papás Elias and Constantinos. He endured it for a time, then lifted his eyebrows, and said the word "Church?" interrogatively, and rather pettishly, opening and shutting his mouth with a snap to signify that dinner should come afterwards. Of course I assented, and the servitor having, not without a struggle, regained possession of the precious Grammar, we all proceeded towards the shrine of the Hagia Triadha hard by. The litter of cigarette ends cast upon the pavement in the shadow of the church would surely have brought an English rector's heart into his mouth.

In making so little mention of the Hegúmenos, or Abbot of the Monastery, it must not be thought that I intend to slight him. Far from that. He was kindness itself, in his every glance and gesture, and a good-looking man besides, with the longest brown beard of them all. But the Hegúmenos is not really a person of much more importance than his brother papás. He is elected by the other inmates of the monastery for a term of years (three or four), at the expiration of which he resigns his account-books and keys to a successor, duly chosen in the same way. Abbot and papás alike chum together in the most fraternal manner; though it seemed to me that the former, by virtue of his dignity, had the casting word in matters of discussion, as also the privilege of drinking a little more wine at meal times than his nominal subordinates.

Well, we had no sooner entered the church than the papás stood like men aghast, and stared at me. They were anxious, to the degree of irritability, to see how I bore the magnificence of their poor little place of worship, which it was natural they should hold in tender and exaggerated esteem. But I had only recently seen the Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens, where the amount of gilding, coloured glass, preposterous artistic work, and the number of its lamps, far exceeded anything the Hagia Triadha could show. I had, therefore, to disappoint the worthy fellows. And then, as if to justify themselves for their expectations, they drew off in different di-

rections towards the grim painted canvases which hung against the walls, illustrating the tragic histories of martyrs and saints, and began a confusing exposition of them all in a breath.

Certainly one of the characteristics of the Greek Church is its affection for bad painting. Such grotesque caricatures of mankind and womankind as one finds in the East in nine churches out of ten, could hardly be discovered elsewhere!

Here at Hagia Triadha the Papá Elias and another papá fell into an argument about the narrative of a certain picture. The Papá Elias, maintained that it was the history of Saint John the Baptist.

"On the other hand," said the opposing papá, "it is certainly that of Saint John the Evangelist. The water proves it. He was a fisherman, and there are the fishes."

"But," argued the Papá Elias, with a stammer that marked his failing temper, "Saint John the Baptist was concerned with water also, and why is he standing like that in the middle of the water, and all the people round him, unless it is to baptize them? Besides, the fish are river fish. It is the Jordan; you will not deny that?"

The two disputants emphasised their words by pointing and gesticulating, so that it was easy for me to understand their difficulty; and I felt a little proud at being able to back the Papá Elias by reference to the final scene on the canvas, where the beheading of Saint John, in a rough-and-ready way, amid a sickening effusion of blood, sufficiently indicated him to be the Baptist, not the Evangelist.

"There!" exclaimed the Papá Elias, with a jubilant start, "I told you so."

It was due to the prodigious imbecility of the artist that I made a mistake in the interpretation of another picture, such as set the papás in a roar. The scene was supposed to represent the temptation of Christ by the Devil, from the pinnacles of Jerusalem. On one pinnacle of the Temple was Christ, and on another the Devil; and, in good faith, making a guess at their respective identities, I guessed wrongly. For five minutes afterwards the papás handed this feeble little piece of amusement from one to the other of them, muttering "Christos!" "Diavolos!" in tones of wonder, but with laughing faces.

One other picture in the Church of the Hagia Triadha deserves a word. It is a canvas replete with patent incongruities.

The subject is Jonah and the whale. The ship is drawn after the model of a nineteenth-century schooner, and furnished with three masts. But it is heavily-laden with three giants, who squat in the hold, filling every available inch of space, and whose heads, nevertheless, rise to a level with the masts of the ship. One of the three men is Jonah, and the ugly leviathan on one side of the ship is already hungering for him.

The ecclesiastics of the Greek Church plead for their monstrous pictures that they do not represent common men and women; that the Saints and Apostles, and much more Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, are types apart, whom it were sacrilege to depict with a physiognomy in no way different from that of the first man or woman met outside the walls of the church. To the end of time, therefore, the Greek Church will offer its worshippers these distorted pictures of human shapes.

Anxious to know why I had not seen my friend the Papá Theodosios, I now drew the Papá Constantinos apart, and managed to put the question to him. The Papá Constantinos assumed a serious countenance, pointed outside the church to the cloister opposite that of the refectory, and then patted his stomach. Without a doubt the poor fellow was ill: was it cancer, or dropsy, or indigestion? But how could a man suffer from indigestion on such meagre fare as a Greek priest's in Lent? I assumed, therefore, with some concern, that the Papá Theodosios was ill of a sad complaint; that he might indeed be dying; and that I should never more see his bundle-like old figure on the monastery mule.

But, with a merry hum, the Papá Constantinos beckoned me to follow him. There was something to be seen which would put all previous experience of sight-seeing in the shade; so I interpreted the childish radiance of his face.

We left the church, and proceeded along one cloister towards the east of the building. Opening a wicket, the Papá Constantinos then led me into a dark little chapel with a bad smell, communicating on one side with a small, rudely-paved courtyard, and on the other with a recess. "Cimiterio!" remarked the papá gaily; and I knew that I was in the place where the bones of many a generation of inmates of the monastery lay in tranquillity.

The courtyard was the cemetery proper.

Under the slabs of stone pits were dug, and here, for a few months after his decease, the papá lay in quicklime, until he was tolerably free from flesh. Just now, the Papá Constantinos explained, they had no one in the courtyard: the pits were overgrown at the mouths and by the chinks of the stones with thick cobwebs. They were all in the place whither, for the present, as for long time past, it was the custom to relegate the bones of the papás. Going to the other recess in the chapel, the Papá Constantinos opened a door. Behind the door was a pile of brown and mouldering bones and skulls, illumined by some aperture from above. They lay in one great, disorderly heap, and the outlines of the more lately dead were just preserved by the decaying tissues of their monastic robes, in which they had been buried. It was an unsavoury spectacle, and not very edifying.

In the meantime, the Papá Constantinos had been poking among the nearest skulls, one of which he now carried away towards the light. It was as fine a head as a man might wish to have, broad in the crown and temples, and not too tapering towards the chin. For a few seconds the Papá Constantinos contemplated this massive skull, stroking its bald crest with one hand. He looked up, remembered me, then tenderly clasped the skull to his bosom, and with the air of a man who had paid his tribute to the weakness of human nature, replaced it with the others, shut the door, and began to hum vivaciously.

"See," he exclaimed, stopping for a moment to point to an inscription, in Greek and Latin, on the wall. "Earth thou art, to earth thou shalt return." And, with a slight shrug of the shoulder, he turned away.

Nailed in a box against the chapel wall, with a lighted lamp perpetually burning before it, was another skull. It was the relic of a benefactor, or dignitary of the monastery, and seemed to be looking at us from its wooden prison with some curiosity. But the Papá Constantinos had no caress for the dignitary.

From the charnel-house we went out into the warm light of noon, to see the monastery hives of bees; but we had no time to go farther through the gardens. The servitor, his French Grammar "for the use of the Greek youth" in his hand, approached us, and, with much parade of turning over the pages, contrived to in-

form me from the book that dinner was ready.

"Bah!" observed the Papá Constantinos, who had watched the young man's enthusiasm of pride with evident disapproval, and he snatched the Grammar from the student's hands. I confess I was glad to see them wrestle for the book after this, and still more so that the boy came off victorious.

RACECOURSES ABOUT LONDON.

SANDOWN PARK AND HAMPTON.

It is a kind of little Holland this country about the junction of the Rivers Mole and Thames, with dykes, streams, low-lying meadows, willows and alders, all in the steaming heat of the sultry summer weather. Everywhere you hear the clank of scythe and whetstone and the swish of the sturdy mower, as he levels the tall, up-standing grass. The scent of hay pervades the air, with a sweetness and fragrance that is sometimes oppressive. The roads are inches thick in dust, dense columns of which, rising above the hedgerows, herald the approach of carriage or cart. Here and there we get a glimpse of the river which usually hides itself so cunningly, that smooth and silent Mole:

Mole, that like a mousing mole doth make
His way still underground, till Thames he o'ertake.

For all it maybe a shy and quiet stream, that sometimes deserts its bed altogether and creeps through subterranean crevices, the Mole has carved for itself a wonderfully pleasant valley that it would be a delight to follow up. Making its way through the downs of chalk and sand, with what a noble entrance below Boxhill where the scenery rises even to grandeur! and through what pleasant rural scenes, rich in pasture and woodland, till it spreads itself in this wide marshy valley!—and here certainly the land is of a very watery complexion, even in this drought and sweltering heat. The little roadside ditches have a distinct flow of water in them towards the Thames, and in the middle of a hayfield rises a link of a little wandering stream, that soon disappears and is seen no more. All this labyrinth of streams, ditches, and runs of water, made Molesey once a somewhat unapproachable island from the mainland of Surrey; and hence no doubt the favour in which it was long held by the pugilists of a former age, who fought many a famous battle on its turf.

At Molesey Hurst there has been some kind of local gathering and celebration involving sports, and games, and horse-racing times out of mind. The original germ of our race-meetings is indeed to be found in the early customs of communal cultivation, when every year the men of the district met with much mirth and joviality to allot among themselves the common pasture, and when those who had horses raced them one against another; and those who had only their own legs engaged in foot races, in wrestling matches or bouts at singlestick, or in sword-and-buckler play. But why the sports of Molesey should go by the name of Hampton Races, it is not easy to say. Possibly before my Lord Cardinal built his palace at Hampton, the common land of that parish—of which the green still remains, that not long ago was the yearly trysting ground of thousands of cyclists—was the scene of the annual sports.

Anyhow, Hampton Races have long been the great saturnalia of the smaller fry of London traders, such chiefly as are possessed of donkey barrows and pony carts, and all the humble class of minstrels, and the wandering tribes who cater for the pleasures of the patrons of the turf. Hampton was the great holiday of the costermonger, of the gipsy too—if a gipsy can be said to have a holiday, whose life is one continued long vacation. But sharing in the growing prosperity of the turf, Hampton Races have become more respectable and less jovial; almost as much of a solemn business function, as an open meeting can possibly be, held within reach of the swarming population of London, a population that cannot justly be accused of taking its pleasure sadly.

It is by way of contrast, and as a caution to overweening pride, that we have coupled Hampton and Sandown Park.

Cloth of gold, do not despise
That thou art matched with cloth of frieze.

Locally, hardly a couple of miles divide the racecourses, but socially, how wide is the gap between their chief frequenters! To Hampton, belong the pony-cart, the pleasure-van filled with costermongers, their female partners, and their rising progeny. To Sandown, the four-in-hand, the coroneted carriage, and all the fashionable people who come to look at each other as much as at the racing.

The approach to Sandown—it was always Sandon till the founders of the Club endowed it with a "w"—is through

a rich and well wooded country. After leaving Clapham Junction, we seem to plunge all at once into quiet rural solitudes, with corn-fields, and turnip-fields, and farmhouses here and there, and not a town or village except the builders' settlements of brand-new villas, which have sprung up about the railway stations. Who would think that the little River Wandie boasted such a wide and important valley, a valley closed in the distance by the Surrey hills? Otherwise, of hills there is not a sign; all is flat, fat, luxuriant, till suddenly we come within touch of the breezy uplands, as the train slackens speed for Esher. And there lies Sandown spread out before us; the level green expanse of sward; the knoll that rises from the gentle slope, covered with white stands and buildings, which have all the elegance of perfect adaptability to the uses they serve—buildings which are clustered against a noble crown of woodland. Nothing could be more appropriate, more charming in its way, than this scene under the chequered light of a breezy sky. Here is the beau-ideal of a racecourse, from the scenic point of view, anyhow; a fit scene and setting for the grandest of national sports.

But what impresses at first sight is the fine contour of the hill, detached from, and yet aligned with, the rising ground behind it. Such a remarkable site must have had a history—it has had a past, as well as the smiling present that sits so well upon its grassy glades.

What is recorded about the place is, no doubt, a very small part of what has actually occurred round about it. That vast tumulus, crowned with forest, whether due altogether to Nature or partly reared by human labour, must have looked down upon strange scenes in its time. For at this point the Thames approaches its nearest to the hill country of Surrey, and this fertile land that stretches to the river-bank was once a wide marsh known in later times as Ditton Marsh; and from the hill above, the eye wandered over fens and flats, with marshy islands, that were covered like the rest in times of floods, when one wide watery plain stretched between Sandown and the rising ground, skirted with forest, on the Middlesex shore.

Who can say whether, beneath the roots of oak and chestnut on that commanding brow, lie the bones of mighty warriors of old times, who here found fitting sepulchre

overlooking the mighty valley, the scene of triumph or defeat? All that voracious history tells us about Sandown is that there was once a priory there, or hospital, founded by one Robert de Wateville, early in the reign of Henry the Second. Then we have the record of a benefactor, whose name is more familiar and of higher distinction; for in the reign of Henry the Third the hospital was endowed by William de Percy—of the great Northumbrian family—the founder of the noble Abbey of Sawley, in Yorkshire, who bestowed upon Sandown the twenty marks which the said Abbey paid him yearly for the manor and forest of Gisburn, also in Yorkshire, with other benefactions of lands in Lincolnshire. All this was for the maintenance of six chaplains to say masses for the souls of the benefactor and his wife, and also to provide a lamp or candle of two pounds' weight in wax, to be always burning before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, where the heart of William Percy and the body of his wife Joan were buried.

The lamp was left untrimmed long before the general extinction at the Reformation. The shadow of the black death settled upon the hospital at Sandown. Brethren and Master were swept away, and they were never replaced. What was left of the possessions of the house, including the manor of Sandown, was eventually transferred to the hospital of Saint Thomas, Southwark, and then, by exchange, came into the hands of the Crown.

Henceforth its history presents no salient points of interest. No great mansion rose upon the site. Only Sandown farm, in its name, preserved the memory of the old foundation, a farm whose fields and meadows stretched across the slope and embraced a portion of the rich lands of Ditton Marsh. If there are any remains of the old priory, they are enclosed within the racecourse; unless, indeed, a kind of grotto, which stands at one of the entrances to the park, half-way up the hill, is composed of relics of the old building. Before this is reached we pass the great gates of the enclosure, which are fine examples of modern ironwork, and which also have a familiar aspect, as if they had been observed in a previous stage of existence. But their history, if they have one, is enshrined in the annals of the Sandown Park Club: annals which stretch not further back than the last dozen years or so.

Almost at the top of the hill, behind Sandown, but separated from it by a natural

depression, is the pleasant village of Esher, high upon the ridge, with a scrap of a green lying in the middle of the High Street, a playground for the boys of the village, with trees here and there, and, in a place of honour, the stump of the original tree beneath which the forefathers of the village may have sat and watched William Percy ride by with his wife Joan.

Pleasant and fresh are the breezes about Esher, which enjoys quite a different atmosphere from the sultry land below. But all is modern : a new church ; milliners' shops ; tall three-storey houses ; a village-hall, with masons still at work ; everywhere pleasant homes with flowers and shrubs ; and then the top of the hill is reached, and the road descends in a graceful curve enwrapped in solemn and quiet woods, with vistas beyond—fold upon fold of trees and hills as if here were the entrance to some enchanted land of sunny glades and soft noontide retreats.

On one side there are the woods of Claremont, in a soft kind of hazy shadow befitting the associations of the place—and some rustic pathway on the other side would bring us to poet Thomson's

Esher's Grove

Where, in the sweetest solitude, embraced
By the soft windings of the silent Mole,
From Courts and Senates Pelham finds repose.

This was Henry Pelham, the amiable and peace-loving successor of Robert Walpole ; and his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, also a prominent figure in the politics of the period, had his seat at Claremont close by. This Esher Place represents the old Palace of the Bishops of Winchester, which once occupied the site, and to which Wolsey retired in the first troubled days of his disgrace, as Shakespeare tells us.

Hear the King's pleasure, Cardinal, who commands
you

To render up the Great Seal presently
Into our hands ; and to confine yourself
To Asher House, my lord of Winchester's.

Esher has commemorated the great Cardinal in the name of house, or terrace, or road, and there is a well in the neighbourhood, which is known as Wolsey's Well. The great Minister, in his fallen state, could hardly have been in the humour to make acquaintance with wells and streams ; but he knew the place of old, no doubt, when he was as yet only Bishop of Winchester ; and that he knew the country hereabouts, and liked it well, is shown in his choice of Hampton Court as the seat of his full-blown greatness.

A pleasant way home from Sandown is by footpath to Hampton Court Bridge, avoiding the dusty roads, and then to walk or drive through Bushey Park to Teddington Station. Diana's Fountain and the noble avenue of chestnuts beyond, have a royal and stately aspect in the evening light ; and along the ghostly white road, what shades of departed greatness we may summon up at will !

RICH AND FREE !

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

I SOMETIMES try to think that I can never have been, at all times, perfectly sane. Any way, the story about myself which I am going to tell is rather a mad one, and I must strive after such a sober simplicity in the manner of telling it as may help to gain credence for it.

I have, of course, reasons, and such as seem to me strong ones, for wishing to tell it, or I should never subject myself to the irksome, irritating, even sickening, effort I know beforehand that the setting of it down, in any detail, will be to me. I might find a certain satisfaction in jotting down a few memoranda of salient points ; but the endeavour to fill in sufficiently to make a coherent whole, will be an inexpressible weariness to both flesh and spirit.

I do not know that I need say anything about my life before the day on which this chapter of it began. On that day, which was my thirtieth birthday, I had been married.

We had been travelling some hours—I and the man I had married—without stopping, before we came to the station at which *she* got into our carriage. I know that, outwardly, I had seemed dull, listless, almost sullen ; while inwardly, a feverish, repressed excitement was gaining more and more possession of me.

Among the sordid-looking people on a particularly squalid platform, her tall, slight figure, with its distinctive elegance ; and her bright, dark sympathetic face, beautiful with something better than ordinary beauty ; at once attracted and fascinated me. She was, evidently, parting from a beloved friend ; she looked stirred and troubled.

When a porter opened the door of our carriage for her, I eagerly moved some of my belongings to encourage her to step in.

She had just done so when a guard, who comprehended the situation, and either had been, or hoped to be, feed to preserve to us the luxury of our own company, suggested another and empty compartment. Absorbed by other things, she did not understand his motive, and merely answered that she did very well where she was, had no preference for travelling quite alone.

It was only at some word spoken by her friend, some minutes later, that she glanced at us—at me and him.

The afternoon was sultry, and I had thrown off my hat and mantle—my gloves, too, had been taken off. Her glance touched my bracelets, brooch, locket, chain, and ring; immediately I was ashamed of the barbaric display of new and expensive jewellery—his presents. Worst of all, her glance touched him; and, most of all, I felt ashamed of him. For one instant her eyes met mine, and their expression either was, or seemed to my heated fancy, questioning and compassionate. My cheeks burned with a sudden heat.

My hearing is always remarkably keen, and when I am, as I was then, in a state of nervous tension, it is preternaturally acute. I heard the remarks made by her friend, that I had a wonderfully interesting face, but looked profoundly weary and melancholy; that he looked a "Philistine of the Philistines." Then they thought no more of us. To the last moment their hands were clasped on the carriage door. When the train moved she gazed from the window till a curve of the line hid the platform. Then, with a deep-drawn breath, she sank back into her corner.

"Well, that is over—the pain of it and the joy," I imagined her to be saying.

I gazed at her as fixedly as she gazed from the window. My husband was busy with his newspapers. The longer I looked at her, the more reluctant I felt ever to look at him again.

From the moment after the marriage ceremony, when he had seated himself beside me, with something in his manner different from anything I had experienced from him before—something of familiarity, of self-complacency, of proprietorship, of coming too close—a new sentiment had awakened in me; mingled fear, aversion, remorse! Oh, I don't know what! Something at the same time quite indescribable, and quite intolerable!

A physiologist would, probably, have attributed my present condition to a seizure

of hysterical mania. To a moralist, it would have appeared as the outbreak of an ill-regulated and passionate, but hitherto repressed, nature. Both would, perhaps, have been wrong and right. Neither would have made sufficient allowance in all that followed, for the strange, magnetic influence exercised over me by this chance encounter.

Just as I became conscious of the vulgarity of my display of ornaments, when her glance touched them; so the contact with her woke in me the consciousness of the degradation to which I had stooped, when I submitted myself to a loveless and interested marriage.

I had not deceived him. I had told him that I had no love for him. But I had believed myself to have some listless liking, and some gratitude, which I had certainly, till now, considered that I owed him. Many a substantial kindness he had shown me. Our relation towards each other, I may as well explain, had been this: he was proprietor and editor of a prosperous provincial paper; I, for some years, had been one of his staff.

I had been feeling terribly worn out. The struggle for a mere subsistence was often a hard one. I was never free from anxiety for the future. Again and again he had urged this marriage upon me. Because I was so wearily indifferent to love, life, all things, and, at the same time, somewhat frightened of what lay before me if all power of brain-work should desert me, I had, at last, given in. I was his wife. I had been married that morning.

And now I began to encourage myself in base thoughts of him, and to tell myself that he had taken unfair advantage of me; had worked upon my fears, had almost used compulsion; that all his kindness had been interested and selfish—part of the price he chose to pay for the possession of a thing he coveted. Letting my fancy run riot in this direction, I worked myself up into such a state that my future with him presented itself to me in the coarsest and most revolting colours; and not so much he himself, but the monster, conjured up by the license of my imagination, became to me loathsome.

Was I, or was I not, responsible for this and all that followed?

All the time "You must go through with it; you must go through with it; you must go through with it," were the words the rhythm of the train ran to.

By-and-by, having a slight cold, I

coughed. This brought the liquid light of her eyes upon me, as she asked if I felt too much draught and would like the window shut.

Before I could answer, he rose to shut it, saying there was certainly too much wind circulating. He stretched across her uncouthly. I hastened energetically to protest that the heat was stifling, and that I could not breathe if the window were put up. I had been gradually moving further from my original seat, just opposite him. I now seated myself in the corner immediately facing her.

"A wilful woman must have her way," he said, and added, close into my ear, so close that his beard brushed my cheek, "My little woman is wilful with a vengeance. What has bewitched her, I should like to know! What is it, Maggie?"

I would not meet his eyes, but shrank away from him and shivered. He returned to his corner and the solace of his papers.

I encountered her gaze, full of wonder and pity, and yet not without some touch of humorous amusement.

"What a strange bride and bridegroom! How sorry I am for her!" I felt sure she was thinking. Perhaps she also felt sorry for him; but that did not at all occur to me. What was, perhaps, most suggestive of real, though temporary, madness in my condition, was my complete self-absorption.

The rapid motion of the train, as we flew along hour after hour without stopping, seemed to increase my excitement. My temples were now throbbing violently; the blood seemed boiling in my ears; and a hot mist was before my eyes. I closed them, threw back my head, and pretended to sleep. An idea had taken possession of me. My closed lids could not keep my brain dark; that was wildly excited and as if full of white light.

"You must go through with it!" was no longer what sounded in my ears. I had formed a scheme. And I hugged myself and nearly laughed aloud with pleasure, when it seemed to me sufficiently feasible—as to the first part of it, at all events. I had absolutely not one relenting or misgiving, not one pitying thought. There was presently a moment when I believe I might have conquered myself; checked my sudden insensiveness; changed the current of my feelings; but I would not! I knew that he had laid down his papers and was looking at me; and I knew that there were perplexity and pain in the eyes I had

always till now called kind and honest eyes; I knew that they were seeking mine. I would not meet them; I looked at her instead.

"I am afraid you are suffering," she said. "You look feverish."

She offered me Eau de Cologne from her bag, and I took it because she offered it, and moistened my temples with it.

"Headache?" he questioned, leaning towards me, "I dare say. I told you so when you refused your breakfast, and would have no lunch. We shall be at the Junction soon now, where we have to change and wait. You shall have some tea then. A good dinner and a glass of wine would do you more good. But women always want tea. Don't they?"

His question and smile were addressed to her. I have often thought that very few men have a pleasing smile; his, then, poor fellow! seemed to me simply detestable.

I resented for her the offensiveness of his familiarity. What right had he to address her?

She paused half a second, before answering, with distant kindness, "that is at least a very general belief;" and I noted a slight mantling of the blood to her clear, dark cheek.

"How long before we change?" I questioned, without looking at him.

"A quarter of an hour, if we should be punctual." And he began to get together and arrange our scattered property.

I drew my hand-bag to me, and opened it.

"A panic about the keys! Another feminine weakness," he said.

"They are safe enough."

What I really wished was to assure myself of the safety of my purse.

"You must not attempt to carry that yourself," he said. "It is heavy."

"I prefer to keep it in my own possession," was my dry, ungracious answer; and I also took my travelling-cloak upon my arm.

Ten minutes before we reached the Junction—we were then in a tunnel, and lamp-light fell on his face—I turned myself to look at him.

Had I never seen him before as he was, or was I seeing him now in the baleful glare of my own delirium? Even now I do not know. And even now I cannot reconcile the face I saw then and his face when I next looked upon it, as belonging to the same man. I only know that my

whole being was now all wild revolt and revulsion as I realised that to this man I had sold myself; that to him I legally belonged; that I had taken him for my companion through all the years of our natural lives. I had been callous to stupor, and now I was alight and alive in every nerve and fibre.

"No; I cannot and I will not."

I spoke those words aloud, addressing them to her. I don't know that she caught my words, but she looked perplexed and startled, as well she might by my excitement of look and manner. Just at that moment the train stopped. We had to change; she was going through. She very graciously helped me on with my mantle, expressing, as she did so, a kind wish that I might soon feel better.

I looked back at her, as I stood a moment on the platform. I had a strong presentiment that somewhere, some time, we should meet again. Indeed, for a moment, I wavered in my preconceived plan, and half decided that, at the last instant, too late for him to follow me, I would go back to her. But, he was again at my side, after having seen to the safety of our luggage, saying he was hungry and should get some dinner. He begged me to do the same.

I refused, told him that I was very tired and should go and lie down in the ladies' waiting-room, and that he might send me some tea.

He took me to the room and left me. Finding that I was alone I hastened to rid myself of nearly all my jewellery, thrusting it into my bag. I waited till the tea was brought; then, taking my cloak and bag upon my arm, I sauntered along the platform and looked in at the window of the refreshment room. He was safely seated there, his back towards the window, bending over his soup.

I passed from the platform, through the booking-office into the street; walking in a slow, sauntering manner at first, lest any one should be watching me. It had been raining a little. The street pavements were wet, and the already lighted lamps were reflected in the puddles. But the rain had ceased.

When I had turned a sharp angle and was quite out of sight of the station, I began to walk more and more swiftly. Directly I relaxed the strain I had put upon myself, to make myself move slowly, a perfectly frantic terror of pursuit and capture seized me.

The station was evidently at one extremity of the town. I soon found myself on a quiet country road. I no longer walked, but ran. But I could not run far; my bag was heavy, and so was my cloak.

I was now a prey to a double-edged terror that was dreadful. Terror of pursuit, and terror of plunging farther into the darkness and the solitude.

Could I return to the town by some other route, I wondered? Would he pursue his journey; or would he remain to search for me? If I could only have known that!

I was soon hurrying on again—walking fast, but more steadily. As yet the road did not seem very lonely. I passed frequent cottages, sometimes isolated, sometimes in groups, and occasionally farm-houses.

But night was upon me, and where and how could I pass it? I did not think I dared remain out-doors through the hours of darkness.

There was still a little daylight lingering low down in the west, and the sky was clearing, and the friendly stars were coming out. By-and-by my road crossed a stream. I paused on the low parapet of the bridge, and fingered my wedding-ring irresolutely. Should I throw it in? As I stood leaning there, deliberating, I heard approaching steps and voices. I hurried on, my ring still on my finger. I had time to cross a stile and hide myself behind a large hedge-row tree.

It was two policemen who passed—this I half saw, half guessed by the steady tramp. I hastened to return to the road, and continued my way, feeling less lonely from the consciousness that they were ahead. It never, somehow, occurred to me that they might be in search of me.

I don't know how far I walked, or how long. I tried to see the time by my watch, but found it had stopped. I had forgotten to wind it the night before. I was beginning to feel conscious that I could not hold on much longer when lights, gleaming through trees, showed me that I had come to a village.

The temptation to knock at some door and ask to be allowed at least to sit beside some cottage hearth till morning was strong. But what reason could I give for being alone so late upon the road? Besides, how could I tell I should be safe?

Presently I came to what I knew by the sign-board was the village inn. I hesitated whether I should seek a night's lodging there; but a chorus of men's voices

came out from the lighted room, and I shrank away into the darkness. Still, I felt safer lingering near human habitations than going on again farther into the unknown open country, where I might drop and die beside the road. And coming presently upon a carpenter's shed I went into it, thinking at least I could rest there a little while. It was not a bad place, and I sank down upon a pile of wood chips and shavings, and felt a delicious sense of repose. I had some biscuits and some chocolate in my bag. I managed to eat of these in spite of the dryness of my mouth and throat. Then I put my bag for a pillow, wrapped myself in my cloak, and wondered if I might not remain there till morning. It was a sweet September night, mild and still. While I wondered, I no doubt fell asleep. I must have slept long and well, for the night seemed to pass quickly. I had one terrible alarm; but only one. A large dog came barking into the shed, and, of course my dread was that it might be followed by its owner. I fed it with my biscuits, talked to it, and caressed it, and, by-and-by, it lay down at my feet, seeming to constitute itself my guardian, and no one called or followed it.

With the first blessed light of dawn I rose, patted my protector, shook myself free from the wood chips and shavings, and hastened to leave the village behind me before it should be astir. At first, my limbs were so stiff, heavy, and painful, that every step felt as if it must be my last; but with use the stiffness wore off.

The morning was perfect for serene radiance. I felt myself as a blot and blemish on its divine purity. Bathed in its air, and light, and perfume, a dim, strange yearning "to be good" arose in me. The eyes and the face that had fascinated me yesterday appeared to me, and appealed to me this morning. She might have taught me to be good. But now, for me, goodness was no longer possible. My future life would have to be a lie, audaciously planned, and unscrupulously carried out.

I was by-and-by overtaken by an old market-woman, jogging along in a pony-cart.

"'Ee be stirring betimes, 'ee be."

"How far to the nearest railway-station?" was my question.

"Nigh upon seven mile, straight forrard. Would 'ee like to ride a bit?"

I would have liked. But the friendly old woman looked inquisitive. I foresaw

a host of questions to answer, or to evade, and I declined her offer.

Seven miles! How should I manage them? If I could once reach a large town where travellers were coming and going, I should feel safe. I could go to an hotel for breakfast, rest, and a bath.

The old woman had long disappeared in the distance, and other vehicles had overtaken and passed me by. The world was awake and astir now. I had rested and gone on again, rested and gone on again, more than once. My feet dragged more and more heavily. By-and-by they would not move. A cold moisture broke out all over me. Everything grew dark. I groped for something to hold by, but found nothing. There was a crash, and a flash of light before my eyes; then I knew nothing.

When I came to myself, I was lying on the seat of a large, luxurious carriage, being carried along briskly by fast-trotting horses. A lady and a little girl were seated opposite to me.

"Is she dead?" I heard the child ask.

"Oh no, dear; she has only fainted."

"What shall you do with her, mamma?"

"Take her to Dr. Kirwan, and leave her there. He will send her to the Infirmary if he thinks it necessary."

"But isn't the Infirmary for quite poor people, mamma? Couldn't we take her home with us?"

"No, child. She may not be a proper person to bring into one's own house."

Here I struggled to sit up and began to explain and to apologise, to express my gratitude, and my desire to be set down; but thoughts and words came very confusedly, and everything reeled and danced before my eyes. I was forced to give myself more time. I prayed, as well as I knew how, that I might regain possession and command of myself.

The fresh brightness of the morning air was helpful, and when we reached the outskirts of the town I was really well enough to be able to insist on being set down to pursue my own way.

My swoon had been a mere accident, I said, consequent on my imprudence in undertaking too long a walk before I had breakfasted.

"If you are going by train you might, at least, let me deposit you safely at the station. I am going there myself, or I should not have been upon the road so early."

I was going by train, I told her; but not

immediately, as I had business to do in the town first.

"Quite providential that I drove in sight just as you fell. You might otherwise have been robbed. As it is you have bag and cloak quite safe, you see. You had nothing else, I think? Your luggage has, perhaps, been sent by carrier? Can my man be of any use to you about it?"

"Thank you, no. It is all quite safe."

I thought her questions dictated more by curiosity than kindness. Her manner was unsympathetic, and, though she had done me a considerable service, I tendered my acknowledgements with little feeling of gratitude, and was glad to be on my own feet on the road again.

The little child would have kissed me as I got out of the carriage; but her mother put her back in her place, and I affected not to see the movement which, nevertheless, touched me, and is often remembered.

The town outside which I found myself was a large one. I went to a good-looking hotel not far from the station. To the woman who showed me to a room I explained that I had been travelling all night, and muttered something of luggage left at the station, as I ordered my bath and breakfast.

After consulting a time-table, I decided to remain at the hotel all day, and to go on at night by London straight through to Dover. There was a comfortable couch in my room, and on it I stretched myself and there I lay. I did not sleep one moment, yet the hours passed quickly. It is a peculiarity of mine, that time always passes most swiftly with me when I am quite alone. And to-day I had so much to think about. I feel sure that I am naturally a truthful person; and the fact, which grew more and more plain to me, that my future life would necessitate so much falsehood and deception, harassed and disturbed me. Fresh difficulties beset every fresh plan that presented itself. Of the man to whom I had pledged myself, and on whom I was practising so cruel a fraud, I still only thought with aversion and resentment. I had no more pity for him than is due from the runaway slave to a bad master.

It was he who had brought me to this pass, I told myself. How blind I had been ever to imagine in him a benefactor! Instead, he had been a hard taskmaster. He had put me in the way of earning a livelihood, no doubt. But, probably, he had also hindered my gaining independence

and fortune. Fifty pounds, which I had with me, was all I had ever been able to save. And I had never—after the one early and accidental sort of success which brought me to his notice—had any joy in my work. This, perhaps, more than anything, had tended to wear me out so early. The joylessness of my life, the joylessness of my work—oh, I saw it all clearly now. I had never been mercenary, I assured myself. In a sense this was true. But, nevertheless, I keenly appreciated some few of the good things of life which only money can procure, and I knew him to be rich, and I took him for what he could give me.

When I had warned him that he would find me a dreary sort of companion for his middle life, and nothing of the nurse and caretaker he would need for his declining years; when I had told him that he was making a bad bargain; he had only laughed at me, called me a characteristic product of this nineteenth century, and assured me that in the fuller, brighter life which he would give me, the sunshine in which he would set me—he had grown almost poetical in his earnestness—I should renew my youth and waken to new interest and enjoyment. He talked to me of the things we were to do, the places we were to see: Scotland now, then the south of Europe. Anything, anywhere I pleased; and, though I listened listlessly, sitting in my dingy, dreary, lodging-house parlour, some warmth of anticipated enjoyment began to kindle in me, and I was able to lose sight of the consciousness, or the fear, that the companionship in which all was to be seen, and done, and experienced, might poison all delight.

The same lines of thought that occupied me through that day went on and on, and over and over, with me all through the journeying of the night; varied occasionally by some trivial reflection of how easy travelling was when you had no luggage; or some speculations, as trivial, concerning my fellow passengers; but never by one touch of remorseful sympathy with him.

SUPPRESSED CHARACTERS.

"CALL no man happy, until he is dead!" was an axiom which expressed, accurately enough, the curious undercurrent of superstition which so powerfully affected the mind of the cultivated, pleasure-loving Greek. And with at least equal confidence may it be affirmed that we know little or

nothing of the real nature of any man, until we have seen him under circumstances wholly unlike those with which we have been, half unconsciously it may be, accustomed to associate him. The clown of the circus, with his painted cheeks and powdered cock's comb, is proverbially a melancholy creature; while a hangman, on the other hand, is not impossibly a wag, whose raillery is appreciated by a select, if limited, circle of turnkeys and police. The very beadle can unbend; and your model butler, a shade more solemn than an archdeacon, provoke in the basement roars of laughter by the funny stories he tells. A big man, limbed like Hercules, when pressed for a song, usually begins to pipe out some sentimental cadence quite unsuited to his weight and size. The most self-assertive member of the company is likely to be the one who can boast of the fewest inches to his stature.

The old platitude which bids us not to trust to appearances, has, after all, a great deal of truth in it, even when there is no absolute effort, no deliberate intention, to deceive. Many men, and some women, are, quite unwittingly, impostors from the cradle to the grave. How could courtly Sir William Temple guess that in his humble parson-secretary, Mr. J. Swift, he was entertaining such a fire-brand as the future Dean of St. Patrick's? The "young Levite"—such was the contemptuous speech of the day with reference to such clerical hangers-on of the great—was abject in the deference with which he treated his patron. The meek scholar no more betrayed the fierce, sardonic, and imperious nature of the Dean Swift that was to be, than does the helpless chrysalis reveal the tints of the bright-hued butterfly.

Our highly complicated social arrangements contribute, in a large degree, to the suppression of character. Young Dick Random is told, from boyhood, that, because of the family living, he must "go into the Church." He does go into it, and a pretty figure he cuts. But although the Reverend Richard is a disgrace to his pulpit, he is yet liked by the poor, to whom he is kind in his rough, manly way, and would have been yet more popular had he been left free to obey the promptings of his nature, and wear blue and silver as a Captain of Irregular Cavalry in India. Young Trivet, on the other hand, who has mild, artistic longings, and handles a paint brush lovingly, is thrust into the counting-house, and condemned to a high

stool and the drudgery of double entry, merely because his tough old father chooses to regard him as a prospective partner in the firm of Tare, Tret, and Trivet, commission agents, of Liverpool.

Very few of us are quite free to select our own paths in life. Even over-abundant riches, especially when coupled with hereditary honours, are apt to become a snare wherein to entangle the feet of the young. If youthful Lord Barblazon has conscience and sense enough to withstand the potent temptations to become a mere idler and votary of pleasure, he is sadly in peril of becoming a pedant and a prig. He will be taught to snatch a fearful joy from conversations with convicts, and will make the prosiest of speeches on the driest of subjects before a sympathetic audience, and does not know that he is applauded because he is a lord.

Then, again, the necessity for earning daily bread tends to the cramping of many a character. Charles Lamb, doing routine duty at the India House, and Auguste Comte giving cheap lessons as a teacher of mathematics, are examples to the purpose. Even Washington, Shakespeare, and Napoleon, had, at the first, an arduous struggle to get through the churlish turnstile with which poverty obstructs the road to Fame's temple. There have been mute inglorious Chattertons, and phenomenal Pic de Mirandolas, who died before they could win even the recognition of regret.

Sometimes a sudden change of disposition, or, at any rate, of conduct, so astounds the world as to lay open the subject of criticism to the charge of hypocrisy. We are proud of the victor of Agincourt, and of the King whose successes made it possible for his infant son to be crowned in Paris; we have a sort of affection for the princely companion of roystering Sir John Falstaff; but no one would have dreamed that, in the person of the wild Prince, of the Royal Corypheus of Eastcheap revelry, of Dame Quickly's adored patron, lay hidden that other self—the devout monarch, the austere conqueror, the adroit diplomatist, who pitted faction against faction, force against force, until he very nearly succeeded in welding together the two principal States of Western Europe under the same sceptre. There have been other such transformations of character, puzzling, but perhaps easy to comprehend, did we but make due allowance for the wider stage, and the ampler opportunities, bringing with them, as in

some cases they do, a quickened sense of responsibility.

There are Judges who should have been Bishops, and Bishops whose lawn and mitre must surely be distasteful to the episcopal wearers, and who would be far more at home in a dragoon uniform, or even in the gaiters and shooting-coat of a plain country gentleman with a soul for short-horns.

The suppression of character affects all grades and conditions of life. Yonder serious clerk, whom his severe employers praise for having an old head upon young shoulders, and who is a volunteer teacher in the Sunday School, and an oracle at the Young Men's Association, abruptly turns out to have hidden the heart of a Borgia beneath that starched shirt-front of his. Newspaper revelations throw a lurid light on the good fellow who laughed so merrily and shook his friends so vigorously by the hand, yet was a poisoner all the while. That French notary, M. Bonhomme, he of the spotless necktie and broadcloth unspecked by a grain of dust, a man whose very spectacles inspired confidence, suddenly proves, when he has bolted with the money and securities of two generations of dupes, and ugly stories come to light, to have been not a defaulter merely, but a great deal worse.

Suppressed characters are, of course, of both sexes. But individuality is so much more marked in men than in women, whose sensitiveness to public opinion makes them nervously submissive to Grundydom, that it needs stronger microscopic power to discern when, so to speak, the square woman has been thrust into the round hole. There is also a kind of fatalism congenial to their minds, as to those of Orientals, which reconciles them with the inevitable. And they are very easily persuaded that things which they do not like are inevitable, when no immediate pathway through the tangled thicket of difficulty can be described. Yet they suffer, as doctors used to prescribe for neuralgic patients could tell us if they would, from uncongenial surroundings. This young bride, whose quick wit and emotional nature would have qualified her, it may be, for a famous actress, finds herself tied to a monotonous home, a dull neighbourhood, and a husband too busy even to guess what ails his Minnie when her colour and the brightness of her eyes begin to fade. That clever, chatty lass is surrounded by stolid relatives, who disapprove of high

spirits, and regard laughter as a personal affront. Yonder earnest girl, whose sense of responsibility is so strong, and whose aims are so high and noble, finds her aspirations thwarted by a domineering mother, and a father whose nature is coarse or commonplace, and has with a sigh to renounce the day-dreams of her youth.

But for the saturnalia of the great Revolution, there would have been no Robespierre, no Marat, as we know them now. The foppish, atrabilious lawyer; the mean little medical adviser of His Royal Highness the Count of Artois's stable boys, would not have been thought worth embalming in even the shallowest of memoirs, had not their baleful names come to be written in reddest ink in the chronicle of the Terror. Yet what Dr. Johnson would have called the potentiality of evil must have been equally strong in these grim heroes of 'ninety-three, even had there been no September massacres, no processions of jolting tumbrils on their dreary pilgrimage to the new-invented guillotine. If our English Edward had not been so high-handed in his attempt to annex Scotland, William Wallace would probably have lived and died without more than a parochial reputation. It took a violent outburst of patriotic feeling, long pent-up, to convert the quiet shepherdess of Domremy into the conquering maid, with her white banner and hallowed sword, marching upon Orleans.

Discipline, military or civil, scholastic or conventual, has always worked wonders in the suppression or modification of character in those subject to its iron rules. Indeed, Society has never been very tolerant of the inconvenient scruples or caprices of individuals, just as a hive of bees would make short work of repressing the eccentricities of a rebellious member of the swarm. It is plain that a ship could not be brought safely into port, nor an army prevented from degenerating into the most dangerous of mobs, if the opinions and desires of the majority were not tacitly overborne by the decision of the commander. In a less degree, the same principle applies to almost every—perhaps to every—department of life. And hence has grown up a very high estimate of the duty of obedience, as the quality without which nothing great or satisfactory can be performed. But obedience, which implies the utter abdication of self-will, however necessary, is a levelling agent which crushes down good qualities as well as bad ones.

The system of caste, roughly and boldly marked out in the Vedas, and painfully elaborated in India by successive priestly legists, was the greatest attempt to put mankind in leading-strings that the world has ever known. The hereditary barber, sweeper, and watchman of a village community were to be the progenitors of a race good for nothing but to patrol with sword and lantern, to shave, and to sweep. A banker was the predestined parent of endless generations of young bankers, whose hoondees should be cashed from Madras to Lahore. The goldsmith, the dullal or broker, the carrier, the gooroo, were to transmit their blood and the traditions of their craft to unnumbered descendants, each of whom should be content to teach the law, to drive laden bullocks, to bargain, or to make bangles and anklets. Yet, in spite of religion and of prejudice, holy Brahmins sank to be cooks, and Sudra adventurers rose to princely rank. Young men, doomed by the accident of birth to some servile calling, caught up spear and shield in the Rajah's army, or obtained posts in the Rajah's household, and so blossomed into unexpected position. And when the last desperate rising of the oppressed Hindus against the Mogul Emperors took place, a grain merchant of Delhi was chosen as generalissimo of the rebel host, which must have included many Rajpoots of noble lineage and with pedigrees extending beyond the era of Solomon.

In mediæval Europe a very general opinion prevailed as to the propriety of suppressing undue manifestations of individual character. Society, it was held, knew much better what was good for a man than the man himself could possibly know. In those days of grandmotherly legislation, of sumptuary laws, trade-guild statutes, and constant interference, people were handicapped in every possible way, so that the tortoise and the hare might run neck and neck in the race of life. It was forbidden to spend too much, or to grow rich too fast. Idle Harry went in fear of the beadle's whip; but the shrewd Giles might be pilloried as a forestaller and regrater of corn, and beef, and Lenten herrings, or possibly excommunicated for usury.

The law affected to prescribe the number of dishes on a citizen's table, and to decide with what sort of fur an esquire's wife might trim her hood. Such a state of things would have been, to a nation of

freemen, intolerable, had there been any serious and persistent effort on the part of those in power to enforce the vexatious regulations which Parliament voted so glibly. As it was, the law was gloriously broken every day, as regarded dress and diet, profit and recreation, and there was almost as much of practical freedom for an Englishman of the Plantagenet and Tudor reigns as for ourselves.

Perhaps the zenith of toleration for individuality of character has been attained, in civilised countries at least, in our own day. It has been held as an axiom that authority should be restricted to duties of mere police, and instead of trying to drive men into the right path, should confine itself to the punishment of evil doers. This sentiment is of recent growth.

In the American Union there yet lingers a prejudice against wine-drinkers and theatre-goers, and, although liveries may be seen in Washington and New York, the indulgence of such a taste for display might, in far-off Western cities, elicit awkward signs of popular disapproval.

Within the memory of middle-aged men it was unsafe to wear a beard at Naples. Such a badge of Republicanism entailed upon its owner the prospect of being dragged by indignant policemen to the nearest barber's shop, and of being there ignominiously shaved in presence of a jeering crowd of lazzaroni.

And if artists, architects, and literary men felt it rash to allow themselves the luxury of an unshorn chin, so did the Neapolitan noble dread the idea of even a bloodless duel. For a duel meant gyves and the galleys, without heed to provocation or respect for rank. The Bourbon Kings of the Italian branch were at least logical in their disregard of the wishes of any class of their subjects, and allowed no foreign, new-fangled notions to take root in the Two Sicilies.

Just so, thirty years since, it was impossible to travel in Austria or in Russia without constantly satisfying some petty official's curiosity as to the motives of such travelling.

It has been remarked that a common garb and an occupation in common tends to make human beings look very much alike. It is hard for the inexperienced eye to pick out any one of a regiment of soldiers, a gang of convicts, or a choir of monks. Even the everyday attire of black broadcloth, of which in the bustling streets we see so much, has a tendency to become

almost a disguise. It was not always so. In the days of fine clothes and bright colours people were very conspicuous.

Everyone in Bath knew Mr. Nash's two best suits—the pink and the blue. Raleigh's doublet, heavy with pearls, and his plumed hat with the diamond clasp, must have been as easily recognised as old St. Paul's. Few Londoners were unfamiliar with Monmouth's golden periwig, or Lauzun's red-heeled Paris shoes. The flashing gold lace; the rich embroidery; the ruffles, fine as a cobweb; the silver-hilted sword; the clouded cane, were too expensive adornments not to be worn over and over again in the Mall and Park, at Ranelagh and the Thatched House.

A dandy's coat came to be almost as well known as its mincing wearer, tripping in silk stockings along the muddy street, with a link-boy or a flambeau-bearing footman to light him to rout or coffee-house. Fine feathers did not necessarily make fine birds; but they certainly gave some scope for the revelation of character.

Professional characteristics are by far less notable than they once were. Ninety or a hundred years ago a British officer, instead of shuffling off his uniform at the first allowable moment, strutted habitually in his tight-fitting coat of scarlet and gold. Bankers, peers, country gentlemen, wore blue coats as surely as the parson wore black. Naval officers—now so mild—shivered their timbers like any theatrical Jack tar, and swore strange oaths by way of shooting their discourse. You could tell, not only by dress, but by diction, the social status of almost every casual customer. Nobody could confound the hard-living reveller, the buck, the blood, the macaroni, in a plurality of showy waistcoats and strangled in his stiff cravat, with the sober, brown-clad citizen. The physician not merely clung to his gold-headed cane, buckled shoes, and Court suit, but assumed a portentous air, such as might have befitted an astrologer of the Middle Ages—Nostradamus, let us say—and was oracular in his speech, something quite different from the kind, cheery doctor of to-day. Even the footmen were finer and more insolent than any plushed and powdered Jeames of the present epoch can possibly be. Counsellor Silvertongue was still the polite young barrister; but he had a formidable rival in overbearing Serjeant Browbeat. A Lord walked as if in robes and coronet, and your Member of Parliament, his hands full of postal franks and his

mind of jobbery, was quite unlike the modest M.P. of our own time.

Some great catastrophe, public or private, often brings suppressed characters to the front. In time of revolution, in the heat of battle, or when the fire spouts forth from the windows of a burning house, the true metal stands out distinct from dross and tinsel. It is a well-known fact that soldiers often prefer their quietest officers, with a discerning eye for the men fitted to lead them in the hour of peril. But, as a rule, bashful merit is apt to go to the wall. Nelson's valour and abilities, but for the crisis of the great French war, might probably have lifted their owner—the son of a needy Norfolk clergyman—no higher than the command of a revenue cutter, or the duty of First Lieutenant of "H.M.S. Yellow Jack," on the West India Station.

Even Marlborough, with his calm courage and consummate skill, was lucky in having some one to fight, and in measuring himself against the Marshals of the Grand Monarque instead of dangling uselessly about Whitehall or St. James's. There have been great actors who never faced the footlights, and born soldiers who never heard a shot fired in anger. But we live in an advertising, self-asserting age, and, therefore, run less risk of blushing unseen than did our diffident ancestors. The amateur in music, in concert singing, acting, or recitation, keeps hard at the heels of the professional, while the dullest-brained youth that ever handled a bat or ran a sprint may hope to attain to notoriety by his prowess in athletic sports. Altogether, there seems less probability of the suppression of any character not absurdly weak in this our day of tolerant good-nature, than in the harsher and more gloomy time that went before.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

PASS over the arrival at Yarrow House; suppose the introductions made; the first dinner eaten; the first tentative gropings after sociability at an end; and let us listen to the comments which are the fortune of each fresh arrival.

Boarders are naturally and perforce critics of each other, and it is the habit to apply to each new comer a sort of pre-

liminary test in the form of an examination paper, or set of questions, calculated to extract the utmost amount of information in the shortest possible space of time.

The post of examiner was made over by universal consent to Mrs. Moxon, in part because she was the oldest inhabitant, and in part because her husband—had he not inconveniently died—would have been made a Canon (Mrs. Moxon lived upon this assertion as if had been a pension, and got a great deal more pleasure out of it), and in part also, no doubt, because she had such a natural aptitude for asking questions.

It seems, at first sight, as if this were a very easy matter; but it is in reality, like other branches of conversation, a fine art, and Mrs. Moxon practised it with pardonable pride in her skill. She usually chose the dinner-hour as the scene of her inquisition, when the victim was surrounded by witnesses, and could not hope to escape detection if he attempted to prevaricate. When she had turned him clean outside in, and left him without an unexplored corner to hide a poor secret in, she let him loose to await the general judgement. This was generally gathered on the principle of the ballot, with a good deal of preliminary electioneering in bedrooms, and a final pronouncing of sentence over afternoon tea.

Madame Drave's vote did not count for much, because she was held to be open to corruption, and the person who in her eyes was "like-ablest and love-ablest"—in the phrase of Mr. Ruskin—was the person who paid cash down once a month. Mr. Burton and his niece were, therefore, perfect.

"You see," she remarked to Mr. Runciman, who had a fashion of straying into her private sitting-room after dinner, "you see it is such a great thing for me to have the best rooms filled. People seem to think I can afford to keep them for the pleasure of their society—a great mistake, my friend."

"The girl would be worth keeping just to look at. She's most uncommonly pretty!" cried young Runciman, who was on friendly terms with his hostess.

Madame smiled. Her smile was her least pleasing expression.

"That's all you foolish young men think of," she said, "just whether a girl is pretty or not."

"And young, and charming, and rich."

"Oh, no doubt, no doubt; but I've got something else to think of, and I only hope you won't go and frighten her away

as you frightened Miss Jones, just when I thought she was safe for a permanency."

"I frighten her!"

Mr. Runciman opened a pair of innocent blue eyes with an air of guileless surprise.

"Oh, you know well enough what I mean," said Madame Drave, without any change in her tone. "And I think, considering how hard it is to make ends meet even with the house full, you might consider me a little."

"Faith! and am not I always considering you?" cried Runciman, who loved to be on good terms with every woman. "Don't I spend my life thinking about you? Didn't I get tickets for the theatre this very night? And haven't you gone and deserted me and disappointed me, so that I haven't the heart to go by myself?"

"Oh, go away, go away," cried Madame, "as if I have a minute to think of theatres with all the cares of this house on my head. Go and enjoy yourself without me."

"She asks me to enjoy myself without her!" cried he tragically, addressing the walls.

"Well go, any way, and leave me in peace to answer my letters. If you imagine that I can afford to sit still because the house is full you are very much mistaken. I have all those advertisements to answer to-night."

"Lure the victims here, and then send them away despairing."

"You see, if I can keep full, I can afford to have things much more comfortable," she said, returning to the practical view of the affair, "and I can keep those two poor things upstairs. I really thought I should have had to give them notice."

She looked straight at the young man; possibly he believed her; possibly she believed herself. Years of matrimony with a foreigner of easy morality had somewhat told on a conscience not too sensitive to begin with.

"Their appetites are certainly improving," said he so gravely that no one could suspect him of sarcasm. "I noticed that the young fellow actually took cheese—never knew him to do such a thing before; he'll be going in for a second helping of meat, presently. By the way," he adroitly warded off a boding storm, "that was a very successful feed. Hope you'll keep it up; the old boy evidently doesn't mean to rise with an appetite."

"You always get a good dinner. Nobody can say my table isn't liberal."

"There's nothing wanting to my bliss but a latch-key."

"You know I never will give anybody a latch-key in this house. It is one of my rules."

"But there's an exception to every rule. Why shouldn't I be the exception?"

Whether Mr. Runciman succeeded in becoming the exception or not, matters very little here; it was the general opinion that he could wrest anything from the lady of the house that he chose to ask, even to the headship of the establishment.

Upstairs, too, the talk was of the new arrivals.

Mrs. Sherrington could not settle immediately to the pile of manuscript she had yet to copy in her neat round hand.

"Did you ever see any one so pretty, so graceful?" she asked, looking across at her husband, who lay back in an easy-chair, taking the rest he held himself to have earned.

"Pretty?" he opened a pair of gazelle-like eyes with languid interest. "Of whom are you talking, my love?"

"Why, of the new girl, Alf dear. You surely must have noticed her; she sat opposite you, dressed in white. She is a great deal too pretty to pass unnoticed."

"Oh, the new people! I heard the man. Heavens! what a voice!" murmured Mr. Sherrington. "Didn't look at him; the voice was enough; it was as harsh as a corn-crake. As for the girl—I don't think I looked at her either; there is only one face that is ever pretty in my eyes."

"Oh, Alf!" cried his wife. Compliments from her husband were perhaps fewer than they had been from the lover of years ago, but they were just as precious. She got up and leant over his chair, pushing back his hair with a caressing touch.

"She is a great deal prettier than I am," she whispered, "and a vast deal better dressed;" but she loved him for the denial.

"It's all a matter of opinion, isn't it?" said Alf, with his melancholy intonation, submitting to be kissed. "I used to imagine my taste was tolerably unassailable."

If men but knew the value of this species of gentle flattery, they would be more liberal in its use. Possibly it would be cynical to suggest that Mr. Alfred Sherrington did know it; but it is certain that his wife went back to her task with a new alacrity and steadfastness of purpose. She believed in him with all her simple heart and soul, and loved him but the

more because the world had been slow in its recognition of his genius. For others, as Miss Walton had remarked, he had a certain charm, and his very selfishness became almost a virtue by reason of its unique sincerity. He was a person for whom women, at least, were always likely to make sacrifices, which by no means implies that he was worthy of them. To his wife, he was the Greatest Man. She would have put him first on that list of heroes, that everybody was busy making a little while ago; his fugitive essays—which she copied so carefully and which very few ever read—would have headed Sir John Lubbock's famous "Hundred Best Books" had she been consulted. She scanned the papers daily in search of his name: a word in praise of him gave her more delight than a new gown. And yet he did not feel abashed, overawed, before this loyal, undeviating belief, as a man of finer fibre might have done. Such simple faith might have stung a lesser man with shame, might have lifted a nobler one to higher efforts and attainments. Alfred Sherrington took it with grace as his right, and slept sweetly while his wife shaded the light and took her softest pen—for Alf loved not the scraping of a quill—and bent her pretty shoulders and tired her bright eyes while she copied his laborious vacuities, and set them forth in their fairest dress for the great editor's eye.

From below came a sound of lively music. There the card tables were set; there the City man told his best story; there were novels, and needlework, and easy chairs; there were the most comfortable Mrs. Major and her Major, with whom to exchange opinions on the new comers, and the widow of the would-have-been Canon, from whom to extract new particulars; but none of these joys were for the scribbler upstairs.

She put them from her lightly enough. A woman's power of sacrifice is practically boundless where her affections are pledged. Mrs. Sherrington would have held it an immense indignity had anyone hinted that she was "put upon." Was it not her dearest privilege to minister to genius?

Rights of woman, indeed! Rights of spinsters—old maids and young maids who are husbandless as yet, it may be; but poll the wives of England to-morrow, and will you find one in a hundred who is not a willing slave? Strong-minded clamourers for emancipation, you will never be free

while the old divine rights of love and marriage are in fashion, for every bride who loves her lord is a new-made enemy to your cause.

In the upper regions of the house where the dwellers on the first and second floors never penetrated, a young girl stood meditatively before her easel. The door was wide, and the borrowed lights from without entered it hesitatingly and but dimly revealed her. She was doing nothing at all; indeed it would not have been possible to do anything in the veiled darkness, and so it is probable that she was either thinking intently or else listening—perhaps for the step that presently made itself heard, crossing a floor above and then descending a carpetless stairs. It came nearer, and it stopped at the open door. Then a voice said:

"Can I do anything for you to-night?"

The girl turned quickly.

"Wait one minute, please," she said in a clear, quick way. "I have something to show you."

She struck a match and lit a candle, holding it up to guide him. It fell on a young man with a pale young face, and hair that had turned preternaturally silver. The grey hair gave him an odd look of being younger than he really was, as if Nature had made a mistake, and, intending him for an old man, had suddenly converted him into an ancient boy. There was a mild, surprised remonstrance in his blue eyes, as if he had not got over some astonishment at the hardness of life; but there was a resolute patience too, expressed obliquely in his shabby dress, in the pile of books he carried under his arm. A great many young gentlemen would have refused to dress shabbily because of the accident of their poverty; and a still greater number would have scorned to eke out an inadequate salary with private lessons, given for a sum that would not have kept them in cigars.

"Look here," she said, when he had got up to her, "look at this."

She turned the light suddenly on the canvas, revealing a study of a girl's head. There was a certain cleverness and facility in the drawing, and the face was pleasing at a first glance; but a further scrutiny revealed a subtle lack.

"You have altered it," he said, when he had lit another candle. "You have changed it somehow."

"No," she said, with a certain gentle

vehemence. "I have not touched it since you saw it last. It is only that we have seen a living face since then and that mine is dead—that is all. It is a ghost; it is a face without a soul behind."

"You will put the soul into it." To him it only meant a little more toil; a little more effort where all was effort.

She shook her head softly.

"Ah, no," she said. "I cannot create a soul though I have made a pretty mask for it to hide behind. I have tried things which are too high for me."

She lifted a brush and dipping it drew a dark streak across the eyes.

He raised his hand quickly to arrest the action, but it was too late.

"Better so," she said. "Now they will not stare at me any more with reproach. 'Why have you bereft us of a soul?' they have been saying all this time, and I never knew it till to-night—till I saw that girl."

There was a little silence between them; life had presented so many problems and perplexities to them both that neither had many words to spare for a new disappointment.

"Haven't you any sketches for me to take to-night?" he said at last. "I must pass the shop anyhow, and I was to get half-a-crown each for the next lot."

She went to a portfolio, and drew forth two little landscapes in water-colour.

"This represents five shillings," she said, as she tied them in paper and handed them to him. "The dealer has, after all, the justest appreciation of my powers. I am sorry you have to go out," she said, as he took them from her and turned away; but she felt the next moment that it was rather a weak remark, for since he had to go, what was the use of being sorry?

Some slight hints have here been given of the effect that Tilly produced on her fellow boarders. As will be noticed, it was all Tilly; she was the head and front of remark, the "cynosure of all eyes," as writers of a past generation (who loved a phrase) would have said, and not that respectable gentleman, her uncle, who was a millionaire.

So much for a pretty face, and a charming smile, and a dress that fits to perfection. It says something for this cynical old world of ours, after all, that the apple of gold still falls in the lap of the fairest, and that money—unadorned—is so often out of the running.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dams Durdens," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER V.

"THE SECRET OF SILENT YEARS."

ACROSS the prison-court the fading light fell dim and wavering. Like one in a dream, Adrian Lyle noted it, and the dull hues of the sky, and the gloom of the long corridor into which he passed. So strange, so far away, so unreal, did everything appear that he seemed even to move by purely mechanical force, not by will or power of his own. A sound struck on his ear—the harsh, grating sound of a key in a lock. For a moment he felt the chill of a deadly fear, and shuddered from head to foot. Then the door fell behind him with a loud, sullen clang. The hand which till now had rested on his arm released its convulsive pressure. He saw before him a figure crouching with hidden face on a straw pallet; a figure indistinct and shadowy, on whose bowed head fell one faint ray of light from the narrow grating high above.

He could not move or speak, so great were the shock and the pain which seemed to come to him as at last he realised the horrors of Gretchen's surroundings. Breathless he leant against the door and watched the swift and silent movements of the woman whom he had brought to this dread place; a movement swift, impulsive, impassioned; yet not so swift or so impulsive as that which held her back and fenced her off with shuddering and repellent gesture; not so impassioned as the cry which rang out in the loneliness and silence of that miserable cell. Gretchen had sprung to

her feet, and, like a wild thing at bay, stood gazing at the figure trembling there in its agony of humiliation.

"Why are you here?" she cried at last. Her very voice was changed. Its sweet, rich music sounded harsh and discordant, and her face—oh, what a face it was which, like the wreck of every fair and joyous hope of youth, lifted itself among the chill, grey shadows, and, with despair beyond all words, spoke out its sad reproach! "Have you come to see your work?" she went on. "Why do you weep? You can't be sorry; you weren't sorry before, when I prayed to you for mercy and forgiveness."

"Oh, my child! my child!" burst forth in agonised accents. "Be merciful to me now. Every word of yours is like a sword thrust to my heart. I, at whose door lies this sin; I, who have deceived you all these years; I, whose life has been one long, long lie! Oh, forgive me if you can; forgive your guilty and unhappy mother!"

Frenzied hands clasped the girl's dress; wild tears streamed down the white uplifted face. The shame, and fear, and passion of those burdened years, took vengeance now on their long repression, and wailed out their terrible secret in broken, incoherent words; words to which the child, so long denied all rights and care of motherhood, listened in hard and stony silence; words, at which the man, standing motionless against that closed door, unseen and unremembered, shuddered and grew sick at heart.

Humiliation so intense, remorse so terrible, had never met his eyes; the mother suppliant to the child; the guilty secret of the one life, bearing such tragic fruits in that of the other; and worst and most pitiable of all, was it to see how cold

and stern was that young face ; how relentless the once sweet and radiant eyes. Stony, calm, and unmoved, she listened to the miserable tale which gave at last the clue to a lonely and unloved childhood ; which showed the mother's sin repeated with yet more tragic horror in the child's young life.

The voice ceased. The shamed and stricken woman lifted her head, and, amidst the gathering darkness, looked with one last imploring prayer to the face above. What did she see in it ? What did that silent watcher by the door see in it ? For both, by one common impulse, sprang forward, and then, as if transfixed by mortal terror, stood—waiting. They could not have said for what—and yet it was less surprise than horror which fell with touch of icy dread on either heart, and kept them spell-bound, awestruck, still as death.

For across the silence there broke a laugh—a laugh more terrible than the very doom it foretold.

"My—mother !" It was only a whisper, but never trumpet-call could have sounded more awful and distinct to the listeners' ears. "My mother !" And again that low and foolish laughter echoed in the dismal cell ; and the girl herself drew back and crouched against the wall, holding her hands out as if to keep off the approach of the poor suppliant. "You must not come near me," she said in the same hushed yet painfully distinct voice. "You do not speak the truth ! My mother. Oh no—she is dead, dead and happy. A mother does not starve her child's heart ; mine was starved and empty, and no one cared for me—until—ah yes, he cared. . . . How pretty the woods are ! Let us gather the wild flowers ; but you cannot see. You are blind—well—I will lead you. It is so sad to be blind."

Her voice broke over those last words : she raised her hands and looked at them, and then at the kneeling figure shaken with a storm of bitter weeping.

"Why do you cry ?" she said. "Have you, too, killed your child ? Do you see my hands ?—there is no blood on them. They say there is. But it is only the earth, the dark wet earth . . . and the leaves. They were so cold . . . I wanted violets and daisies—my own name-flower which he loved and told me about in the spring woods. But there are no daisies ; and it is cold in the woods—oh so cold. I think sometimes that the earth is too, but it is not deep enough. . . . nearly deep enough yet. You

must tell them to put more over me, or I cannot rest."

She ceased abruptly, startled by a cry which rang out through the darkness of the prison cell—the cry of a strong man's agony.

"Great Heaven ! Not this fate too ! I cannot bear it !"

He crossed the space between them with one rapid stride. He seized her hands, and his eyes were reading the havoc that these miserable days had made in the haggard face, the blank dull eyes.

"Gretchen !" he cried wildly. "Gretchen, don't you know me ?"

She turned her eyes to his in the gathering gloom. Then they wandered away and rested on the figure by the pallet. A strange, foolish little smile came to her lips.

"Send her away," she said. "She is not my mother. I do not want her." Then she crept closer to his side as a child who seeks shelter and protection. "Is your heart warm ?" she said in a half whisper. "Mine is so cold—oh, so cold. I think there is a stone there. . . . I wanted to place it on the grave above the leaves and the earth . . . but I could not get it."

He dropped her hands and turned aside. Blinding tears filled his eyes. He could not see her face or anything else. It seemed as if the gloom and blackness of eternal night shut him out now from all that meant life and joy in a world barred by dreary prison-gates.

What had he hoped—what expected ? Not this, he groaned in his heart. Anything—anything but this !

The woman at his feet arose. He could not see her face ; the dusk had fallen rapidly ; the last gleam of light from the dying day quivered and passed into the darkness of night ; and the three, linked by such a chain of misery, stood side by side in that dreary cell, not speaking, scarcely even breathing ; in each hand the cup of sorrow which Fate had willed that they should drink to its very dregs.

A sound of steps ; the rattle of keys ; Gretchen sank down again in the same attitude of dreary apathy. Not all Adrian Lyle's imploring words had drawn sign or answer from her lips.

When the turnkey opened the door, he summoned self-command to ask him of the girl's condition.

"Oh, she be right enough ; she's only shamming," was the brutal rejoinder.

"Thinks, may be, that she'll get off easy. Bring her in 'temporary insanity,' you know. She's sensible enough when she likes."

Adrian Lyle shuddered with horror.

"For Heaven's sake," he implored, "be kind to her. She is so young, and has been delicately nurtured and cared for. To see her thus—in this miserable place——"

"Oh, as to that, I'll do what I can," returned the man more graciously. "'Tain't much as is allowed; but she wouldn't say anything as to who she was, or her friends, or aught o' that sort. Now I sees that she's respectable, we might move her to a better place, if so be you'd speak to the Governor, or, may be, you know one of the magistrates."

"No," said Adrian Lyle brokenly, "but I will call on one if you will give me his address."

"You can get that from the Chaplain. Perhaps you'd like to see him; and I suppose," he added, "you're a-going to have her defended. There's not much time to lose. Case is coming on o' Friday."

"Yes," he said hurriedly, "I will see to that."

The woman at his side pressed his arm. "Take me home now," she said faintly. "I cannot bear more. It is too horrible."

Anna von Waldstein was not a weak woman. Far otherwise, indeed. She had been accounted very proud, cold, stern, impassive all her life; denying to herself that softness and mutability of temperament which is essentially feminine; excusing no weakness, because displaying none; and as little inclined to be compassionate to misfortune as to be self-indulgent to error.

Brought up with a rigour that was almost harsh, she had known but one love in her childhood's days, the love of her twin-sister. That love had been an influence gentle and humanising to both, and in a great measure had served to atone for the absence of other affection.

There had come a shadow on its brightness once, but the gentler and more yielding nature had triumphed; true, staunch, and faithful as in the pledge of childish days it had vowed to be, that love had done battle for its gentle faith, and believed in its idol even when that idol had fallen in the mire and dust of a bitter shame.

Did the proud woman think of these things now, alone and keeping sorrowful

vigil with despair, whose leaden hand pressed hard and sore upon her aching heart? Ay, that she did, passing in sorrowful and remorseful review all that had come and gone since first in girlhood's innocence and heedlessness, she had listened to the voice of a tempter, who had wrecked her life and poisoned all her future.

She had not realised for some time what it was she had done. He had seemed so generous, so brave, so true; and then, at last, when she had learned the truth—even then she had blamed circumstances, not him, not her lover, with the frank brow, and the bold laughing eyes, and the music of love in his voice.

Then came that black and awful time when Death laid his hand upon her life, and her child's cry alternately lifted her soul to heights of joy and dragged it down to depths of horror and despair. During all that time—faithful still when all looked faithless—that tender sister's voice had sounded in her ears; had whispered of hope and of forgiveness; had rescued her from the deep, dark waters that were closing overhead—rescued, and restored her, and in pure love and infinite pity, had shown her a way of escape, which, safe and almost innocent then, now looked but one long network of black and heartless deceit.

Her mother had died, her father was old and infirm, failing in sight and sense. What more easy than to utilise the marvellous likeness which had always existed between them!—a likeness which sorrow and suffering had deepened, until now the two faces were but a reflex of each other, and would have needed a keen eye to detect the younger from the elder, though, indeed, seniority was but a question of hours.

Anna von Waldstein had listened, hesitated, and then finally accepted the sacrifice. She was in desperate case. Homeless, moneyless, with her child to support, and such a burden of shame upon her proud shoulders as even a stronger nature might have shrunk from bearing, how tempting looked the refuge offered. The home which, cold and loveless as it might be, was yet a place of shelter where none would know her shame, and where her child might be brought up under her own care.

The temptation had come to her again and again, urged by that faithful and self-sacrificing love, and at last hesitation ceased to parley; deception, boldly faced, looked less guilty.

Anna von Waldstein, the sinner, returned to her father's roof, bringing the tale of the erring sister's death, and demanding the shelter of that roof for the nameless orphan whom she had brought in her charge.

Marie von Waldstein, the innocent, entered a convent; and a year afterwards died, happy in the thought that her sister and her sister's child were safe, and the deception undiscovered.

The father had never suspected the cheat. The likeness between the two girls had always been so great that it had been very easy for Anna to identify herself with Marie, and, though a mother's keen eye might have read the subtle difference, the father, cast in harsh and sterner mould, failing in health and less keen of vision, never thought of questioning it.

Never could it have entered his head that a plot so daring, yet so simple of execution, could have been carried out so boldly under his very roof; and Gretchen, though denied all motherhood, yet grew up under a mother's care, knowing nothing of the love which was so sternly and harshly repressed, and ignorant of the dread and horror which surrounded her young years, and made every look, and smile, and question a thing of torture to that proud and suffering heart.

But a day came when the fabric of deceit so skilfully erected threatened to crumble in the dust. When eyes, long watchful and cruel in their silent suspicion, at last read the secret plainly enough, and boldly taxed Anna von Waldstein with the deed for which she had almost ceased to fear discovery. There had been no questioning, no hinting, nothing but a bold assertion of facts, skilfully put together, carefully evolved, and at last complete.

Gretchen was but a year old when Anna von Waldstein learnt that her secret was in the hands of the stern and rigorous Sister whose iron hand had ruled her childhood, whom she hated, and feared, and yet obeyed, because the exaction of spiritual submission is the one creed which the Church of Rome most rigorously enforces; and this submission, wound lightly as a thread about her childish years, became in after-life a chain which fettered her limbs, and ate into her flesh, and turned every hour of existence to martyrdom and dread.

The truth once guessed, she was bidden to reveal it to her own confessor, and these two had never ceased to make her sin a living torture, and her child its hourly penance.

Not in any moment of self-forgetfulness could that most wretched mother hold her child to her heart, or breathe one word of the love which at times threatened to overflow the barriers of restraint. No natural affection, no tender words, no sunshine of secret and gentle sympathy had brightened the long, long road she had been forced to travel. What wonder that that proud veil of silence and indifference was drawn yet more closely round the stately figure; that nothing was left for the child to reach or claim, nothing that could bring them heart to heart in any hour of sorrow or compassion? Nothing, nothing, nothing!

Anna von Waldstein remembered all this now, and shuddered as the cold, dark hours dragged heavily along. The innocent had indeed suffered for the guilty. The agony of her soul was such that she would have welcomed death but too gladly, yet no such mercy could be hers. Beyond all hope, beyond all help, so looked her life henceforwards—dragging its guilty secret to the end, and beholding, afar off, yet near enough for dread unspeakable, the yet more terrible fate which she had called down upon her child's innocent head.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STRAIN GROWS HARDER.

So fast had event crowded on event, so quickly had one calamity but foreshadowed another, that Adrian Lyle had scarce given a thought to the gravity of the charge against himself, a charge which he must answer, or else accept as a stigma of indelible disgrace.

He knew well enough the hand which had dealt it; the lips which had framed the lies repeated to his face by Alexis Kenyon; and he found himself inwardly wondering why Bari hated him so bitterly, and what his object could be in maligning his character as he had done.

That wonder brought back in some dim fashion the memory of that night in Venice, when the man's face had awakened a recollection in his mind too vague and undefined to be at once determined—a recollection which had escaped him again and again, but to which Bari's malignity now lent a certain force and importance which claimed his notice even amidst the sufferings and dread that had fastened upon his very life. Yet even now, on this terrible night, a night that had taxed his energy and self-control to the very utmost, he pushed aside

the matter which concerned himself, and gave up all his time, and thought, and consideration to Gretchen's service.

He had seen the magistrate, who had committed her; the chaplain of the gaol, who had endeavoured, though vainly, to gain any clue as to her name, or friends. From both he had heard the same story.

She had been found by a labourer, going to his work in the early morning, in a little lonely wood on the outskirts of the town. She was standing by a little mound of earth, scattering leaves over it in a dazed and mournful way, "like so as if she were daft," the man had said. He had watched her for some moments surprised at her strange occupation. Then she looked up and saw him, and immediately hastened away, "quite scared-like," to use the man's words again. Impelled by curiosity, he had approached the place, and turned over the wet earth and the damp, dead leaves with his boot, and there buried beneath, and wrapped in some fine white linen—part of a woman's underdress—was the body of an infant. It was quite cold, and very, very small.

The man, horrified by the discovery, took the child in his arms and followed the woman. He overtook her on the high road leading to the town. She seemed very ill and weak, and, when he showed her the child, was well-nigh overwhelmed with terror. He bade her come with him, and went straight to the police station and gave notice of his discovery.

The woman had said nothing. No one could get a word from her, but the evidence was so strong that she had been committed to prison on the charge of suspected child-murder, while enquiries were being made as to her name and circumstances.

There was to be an inquest on the body of the child the following day; the medical evidence would decide as to whether it had lived after its birth; there were no marks of violence, and it was possible the little creature had come by its death naturally; and the poor young mother had made its grave in this strange fashion: but all this was conjecture. In any cases, the circumstances were grave enough and serious enough to necessitate a trial; and the magistrate intimated that it would be as well for Mr. Lyle to secure a clever counsel to defend the girl if he was interested in her, and mentioned the name of a barrister, celebrated for criminal cases, whose address he gave the young clergyman.

It was nearly two o'clock when Adrian

Lyle took his way back to the hotel. He felt weary and exhausted; he had tasted no food since the morning, and he had undergone mental torture sufficient to try the strongest nature.

The whole weight and burden of this terrible affair was on his shoulders—the man to whose cowardice and selfishness this poor child owed her ruin, was far away from sight or knowledge of it. He, whose guilt had laid the foundation-stone of a tragedy so fearful; whose place, in common justice, should have been beside the poor, distraught creature in her dreary cell; he, alone, suffered nothing, knew nothing.

Little wonder that Adrian Lyle lifted up his white and haggard face to the clear and starlit sky, with an inward wonder at the callousness of Heaven, the pitilessness of Fate; little wonder that, in this sad hour of hopelessness and overwrought feeling, all the cynical truths, the cruel doubts, the hard and undeniable facts which of late he had listened to, and reasoned against, should return to his mind clear and cold as the voice that had uttered them.

The subtlest temptings ever come when the mind and body are at their weakest. Ghastly shapes of sorrow and despair crowded round him now; sad, dead eyes of tortured human creatures looked back through mists of darkness which had shrouded death-beds; prayers appealed to him; voices besought him; and the anguish of the dying and afflicted cried wildly out against their doom and shrieked within his ears: "Your God is not love, but hate; pitiless, unsparing, relentless—a phantom of man's creating, to whom they vainly cry."

He paused in the quiet and deserted street, and—so it seemed to himself—for one mad, ungoverned moment, threw open the portals of his soul, the inner and secret workings of that spiritual life to which he had striven to be true through sad and toilsome years. What had he gained?

Even in his worst days—his eager and impulsive youth—he had been essentially a religious man, believing in the God of the Christian creed, and seeing in Him all that was most sacred, and perfect, and divine. Zealously and fervently he had lived up to the vows he had made, and the profession he had accepted. No whitened sepulchre was he; no living lie or mask of holiness. What he had believed he had taught; what he had

vowed he had carried out in the face of all obstacles. But now—the thought came to him, falling straight and clear as falling star from the Heaven on which his eyes were fixed—"What if that Heaven were but a dream, and the Godhead it enshrined naught but a beautiful conception, poetic and sublime, but with no more reality or substance than the vision of a poet's fancy, self-created, mythical, and with but a shadow's transient existence?"

Was man ever conscious—fully and entirely conscious—of that far-off and fully-adored Divinity? Did not science and phenomena contradict the strength of the most perfect Faith? Did not Nature and Humanity alike declare, "The grave is all, and end of all"? Who has come back from thence to give us assurance of the Beyond, that we call immortal? Prayer, suffering, sacrifice, self-denial, what did they all come to? What evil could they avert? What destiny could they change? None, none; so moaned the voices of the night within his ear! None, none, so cried his own despair, rising like the waves of an ever-deepening sea, to drown for ever and for ever the hopes he had held, the Faith he had taught, leaving no foothold for failing steps, no straw for clinging hands, mighty as Sin and terrible as Suffering, those twin-gods who rule the whole groaning, travelling world where Humanity finds its dwelling.

The state of moral tension became intolerable. It was too much for any mortal powers. He felt his brain growing dizzy, a deadly faintness crept over his frame. With one feeble effort for strength and composure he staggered on a few steps, then threw his arms out blindly to the darkness that closed him round, and fell heavily forwards, without sound or cry, at the feet of a man advancing rapidly towards him.

The stranger paused, startled, and not a little alarmed; then bent over the prostrate figure, and turned the face towards the light that streamed from the hotel-doors.

A cry of horror and dismay left his lips: "Great Heaven, it is Adrian Lyle! How came he here?"

The speaker was Sir Roy Kenyon.

A CRETAN MONASTERY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

DINNER was served in the great refectory for Michaelis and myself alone. A vase had been filled with flowers and put in the

middle of the table for adornment; and their colour, together with the crimson patches of light on the flagged floor, were effective details in a scene that was highly picturesque. The crimson light on the floor was wrought by the sun shining through the decanters of the ruddy monastic wine.

Our meal was as frugal as was right, considering that we were in the very middle of the great fast, and we were waited on by the servitor, book in hand, who, in a low tone, conjugated to himself the indicative mood of the verb "être," with a side-glance at me now and again to see if I were shocked at his pronunciation. Michaelis was provided with a plateful of boiled snails in large speckled shells, and some cabbage material to eat with them. But, had he been about to sit down to a Lord Mayor's feast, he could not have made a more genial obeisance to the papas before beginning his dinner.

As for the Hagia Triadha wine and the Hagia Triadha honey, they were both excellent, and the papas were very gratified to know that I thought so. The wine was home-made, and not very far away from the windows of the refectory was the spacious cemented tank in which they crushed their grapes in autumn by trampling them with their hard feet in the old-fashioned way. In truth, the monastery wine was so good and so strong that when we had drunk as much as was good for us, I was glad that we had a pretext for rising. Michaelis was to return to his wife and family that evening, when I had done with him. But, before returning, he was to escort me over the Akrotiri mountains to a remote little church cut in the rock, famous for the romantic solitude and sublimity of its situation, and for a stalactite cavern in the bowels of the mountain close by. When I add that this cavern has been mentioned in a paragraph with the grotto of Antiparos, it will show that it was a remarkable one.

We set off anew therefore as soon as dinner was over, taking with us two of the boys of the monastery as guides.

For an hour we fought our way through the ground-shrubs, the dwarf holly, scrub-caroub, and arbutus, which grew in dense thickets on the rocky slopes of Akrotiri's beautiful peaks. It was a delicious afternoon. The White Mountains in the distance had a golden tinge upon their snow, and there was a golden haze over the country which etherealised, but did not

obscure it. Then we entered the defiles by which we were to gain the seaward side of the hills without toiling over them.

The boys were in the gayest of spirits, singing Greek hymns and ballads in melodies as impetuous and erratic as the temperament of the modern Greek. But when we were in the gloomiest and narrowest part of the defile, where the red rocks rose precipitous on either hand, one of them abruptly stopped in his chant, and bounded aside to a part of the cliff which was scored with certain signs and crosses. Here, it seems, in the last insurrection, the Turks came upon eight Cretan men, and cut their throats like so many sheep. There was no escape for the victims: Nature had securely cooped them as if for slaughter, and their bodies lay in a heap until the monastery sent and fetched them away. Michaelis and the two boys told the tale with much ferocious pantomime and flashing of eyes.

From this tragic spot we ascended to a small mountain plain, environed by the rounded summits of the Akrotiri range. Under any but a southern sky the surroundings would have seemed bleak in the extreme. In the midst of the plain was a square, white-walled enclosure, with towers at each corner, and a white building at one side. A few fig trees and almonds grew by the walls, and some sheep were feeding within the enclosure. This was the monastery of the Hagios Joannis, a place of infinite calm and quietude. The points of the White Mountains just shone over the "arête" of the defile by which we had approached the monastery, and gave an added charm to this lonely building.

We rang the bell at the portal of the Hagios Joannis, and immediately afterwards a large, slipshod papá, with hanging cheeks, opened the door and invited us inside. The Grotto of Katholiko, whither we were bound, was in the district of this monastery, which, therefore, had the monopoly of supplying the candles necessary for its exploration.

The courtyard of the Hagios Joannis was a radiant little oasis of colour. Orange trees were there laden with fruit; geraniums covered with blossom towered far above our heads; carnations sweetened the air, and many another flower helped the carnations. A fountain of delicious water flowed in the midst of this little Paradise.

The boys forthwith slaked their thirst at the fountain-head, and I was for following their example, when they stopped me, and, with a wink of cunning, observed

that the papá should be asked for coffee. I said, "No;" but it was done in the twinkling of an eye, in despite of me. And for a few minutes we sat down on some suspiciously unclean divans in a small bare room opening from the courtyard. Two papás kept life warm in each other at the Hagios Joannis; visitors were rare indeed; one could therefore forgive the good ecclesiastics a certain slovenliness in their appearance and a certain oddity of conduct, both of which were, no doubt, induced by their exile from society.

We were drinking our coffee, which the one papá had made and the other served, when a stately cock stalked into the room, and chuckled with pride and affection at sight of the papá, between whose stalwart legs it sought for grains on the hard earth floor. The next minute in came a hen also, with her neck stretched forth in anxiety, and a look of care in her bright eyes. But the burly papá who had welcomed the cock rose hurriedly when he saw the hen, and with harsh noises and a waving of his arms, expelled her summarily. Then he returned to his seat and apologised for the scandal. Thrice the hen essayed to enter, and thrice the papá drove her forth. But at the third attempt patience was exhausted, and with angry mutterings both the papás set upon her, captured and pinioned her, and conveyed her to a little chamber apart, where, notwithstanding her screams and wails, she was shut in solitude. The petted cock all the time had stood with quivering comb, and seemed to approve these outrages by a low cooing sort of sound, and a quiet tossing of the head. Why this antagonism for the hen, and affection for the cock? I asked, when peace was restored. And then, with bated breath, the big papá observed that, to the best of their knowledge, the hen was the only feminine thing within the monastery walls, while with the cock it was otherwise. I suppose the papá imagined that he was transgressing the monastic rules by giving the poor hen the run of the conventual establishment when they were alone; for at Mount Athos no female dog, cat, or fowl is allowed to be received.

Well supplied with candles, we now continued our climb over the hills, until the blue Levant was before our eyes. Then, by a steep path and several score of steps cut in the rock, from the side of which was a perpendicular fall of a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet, we descended carefully

to the end of a mountain gorge, where the remains of buildings and the gaping mouth of a cavern showed that we were at the deserted shrine of Saint Katholiko. In times past this was a populous retreat; but now, except once or twice in the year, when a papá makes pilgrimage hither, and sleeps for a night or two in the damp rock-hole by the side of the chapel, it is wholly abandoned. A fig tree, twenty feet high, grew from the heart of one roofless building, testifying, in a measure, to the time of its desertion.

Of the Katholiko Grotto let it be enough if I say that we explored it until we could stand the heat no longer. From chamber to chamber we clambered over the rock boulders, slippery with the constant drippings from the superincumbent mountain mass, with monstrous stalagmite columns on both sides of us. Some of these latter were as thick as a man's body, and firmly fastened to the base of the cave; while myriads of others, in earlier stages of their growth, sparkled under the fantastic flicker of our torches. One chamber in particular was remarkable for its Gothic architecture. We entered it by a difficult ascent and an awkward twist between two huge stalagmites; and the boys placed themselves so that their more distant illuminations cast a suggestive halo over us and our surroundings. We seemed involved in a maze of sparkling shafts, from which it were almost impossible to unravel ourselves, without the aiding thread of some modern Ariadne. But, as I have said, the heat was insufferable, and we were literally streaming with perspiration when we reached the mouth of the cave once more.

My attendants went straightway from the grotto to the little church in the rock adjoining it, and offered their candles before a faded painting of the Madonna, which they first of all reverently kissed.

This church is some thirty feet long by fifteen, with a low, domed roof. Its natural walls were thick with green mould; its floor was littered with the refuse of sheep; and, on every available article within it (altar pictures, candlesticks, shrines, and panels) were multitudes of initials, Greek and Latin, with dates going back scores of years. From the rude porch of the church one looked up towards the Akrotiri summits, sparsely covered with wild olives and caroubes, down to the deep ravine of the gorge trending seawards, and out at the Levant itself, stretching to the horizon, as blue in colour as the sky over our heads. The seclu-

sion was absolute: we seemed to be at the back of the world.

Another cavern had to be visited on our return walk. This is known as the Cave of the Bear, from the similitude to a bear "couchant," of a huge isolated rock in the middle of the spacious and lofty cavern. This "bear" has been turned to account somewhat craftily. From the rocks overhead incessant drippings of pure spring water upon the bear's head, have worn a dainty basin therein. This, in turn, by overflow, has dug a hole in the animal's back. But for the further reception of the water elsewhere a great cistern has been excavated under the nose of the animal, and this, fed by the discharge from the statue, is perpetually filled with a supply of the sweetest water in the world. One might ask of what use is this water, where there is no man to be profited by it? But in Crete every cavern is registered in the minds of the Christians, as a possible and safe hiding-place from the Mussulmans in case of need; and many of the more complex and secure of these hill resorts have given shelter for months at a time to scores of Cretan women and children, thus put out of the way and temptation of the intolerable Turk. Here also in a recess by this cave is accommodation for a papá. A filthy straw mattress, an oil-lamp, and some bits of rags: this seems to be the sum of the fixtures which a papá requires for his night's comfort in this awful abode of rheumatism.

The sun was sinking when we again set foot in the monastery of the Hagia Triadha, and the excruciating chant of the papás in their church broke the still air. Michaelis was ready to return to Khalepa; but, before going, he wished to join in the service for awhile. We entered the lighted building, therefore. Eighteen papás were present in their robes and head-gear, and a couple of little boys composed what by a euphuism may be termed the choir. Save Michaelis and myself, no one unconnected with the monastery was present.

It were presumptuous for a native of a land where religious ritual is disfavoured by the sober reason of the majority to pass sentence on the florid and, as they seemed, trivial details which composed the service in this Greek monastery. But there was certainly much to excite a stranger's curiosity in the quaint homeliness of the conduct of the papás among themselves; in the singsong style of their readings; the absence of music proper; the crude

colours of the pictures on the altar screen, the illumined vermillion and gold of which were in the hardest contrast with the unlit nave of the church where the shadows of night were fast taking possession; and the remarkable flow of the "Kyrie Eleisons" from the mouth of the little boy, who for a time held the attention of the ministrants. Once this boy stopped, as if for breath; but a sharp word from one of the papás made him take up his parable again, though the apparent look of reproach in his eyes ought to have gone to the heart of the man. Towards the end of the service, Michaelis interrupted it for a moment to shake hands all round and depart homewards. A few minutes afterwards the lights were extinguished, the papás smiled with one accord, and began a familiar conversation, and two of them linked their arms in mine and led me out into the courtyard. They were all in the best of humour, judging from appearances.

One of my companions proved to be the Papá Elias, and, as if he sympathised intuitively with my wishes, he guided us to the cloisters where I supposed the Papá Theodosios was lying ill. With many a kind word and exhortation, they led me on to an open corridor, whence we could see the early stars shining already, and hear the falling water of the fountain below. Then they tapped at a door, and the next moment I stood in the nest sacred to the person of my friend, the Papá Theodosios.

I was delighted to find that the good papá was not seriously ill after all. He had hurt his foot with a pitchfork or something of the kind, and had besides a trifling ventral disorder; otherwise, he was in excellent health and spirit. His welcome, indeed, was of the warmest. His fine, fat face flushed with nervousness and excitement; he shook my hand again and again, as if to help him to regain his equanimity; and for the time he seemed unable to satisfy his hospitable desires. But all in the minute, he had opened a private cabinet by the foot of his bed, taken thence a black bottle of rum, uncorked and smelt it, and sent one of my attendant papás in quest of some tumblers. No doubt the Papá Theodosios had been recommended to take rum for the good of his stomach, and his sense of courtesy forbade him to drink such toothsome medicine alone.

Of the papá's sanctum, little need or ought to be said, except that it was singularly characteristic of a man of war as well as of a man of peaceful profession. An

ugly pistol surmounted his bed head, and the pistol was set off by two long guns. For the rest, there was as much dust and dirt as one usually finds in a room unblest by the untiring hands of woman; and I am sorry to say that the Papá Theodosios nurtured many fleas in the midst of his furniture of trifles.

The papá who had gone for the glasses was so long absent that the Papá Theodosios was for sending the Papá Elias in search of him. But in the nick of time he returned, followed by five or six other papás, and with them the servitor, who kept his place in the French Grammar with his forefinger and thumb. Caps were thrown pell-mell upon the Papá Theodosios's bed, everything available for sitting was brought forward, and very soon there was such a turmoil of happy talk and laughter that one had to shout instead of converse in the ordinary tone. This noise of conviviality drew other papás into the room, and these, finding no other space for them, tumbled themselves on to the bed with little or no regard for the invalid's comfort.

I believe that the Papá Theodosios would like to have cleared his room of all its occupants save two. They had come uninvited, and come at a critical time. Had he not brought out the rum, all the inmates of the monastery might have crowded into the room and been welcome. As it was, every one had to taste the rum, and as a consequence, the bottle was soon emptied, and the Papá Theodosios looked blue and became taciturn. But I humbly crave the papá's forgiveness if I wrong him. He did his best to entertain us with photograph albums and books, the contents of which he knew nothing about, and with me, at any rate, he was amiability itself. But when it began to wax late, and the owls began to drone outside, and one could not but think of supper, the servitor, who ought to have been in the kitchen, put an end to our assembly. With his lips apart, he stepped timidly to the front, and was about to request some information on two or three puzzling points in the Grammar when, with one accord, the papás rose upon him in a hubbub of indignation. They even expelled him from the room with contumely, and by some strange influence the rest of us felt constrained to follow the poor student down the stairs, after wishing the Papá Theodosios "good-night."

Supper, it appeared, was already waiting

for us in the refectory. A table was spread in the corner for the Hegúmenos and myself; the other papás were to share among themselves the cold comfort of the spectacle. So at least I thought when we began our meal; but ere long it proved to be otherwise. As the spirits of the Hegúmenos rose under the cheering influence of his own good wine, he invited papá after papá to approach and drink a glass, or take a snail, or a little fish, or a long thin radish pulled from the monastery garden. As a result of this, the supper laid for two was irregularly shared among twelve or fifteen, and the decanters of wine were replaced several times by the doleful servitor. Out of pure good nature, I went so far as to offer the Papá Elias an egg, having remarked that he had abstained from rum in the bed-room of the Papá Theodosios. But I was fairly humiliated by the chorus of disapprobatory sounds, and gestures with which my offer was met. "What! eat an egg during Sarakosté (Lent)! Maria, keep us from such wickedness!" So said the Papá Elias himself, with a frown which made him look transcendently ugly.

However, though they would not eat much, I was greatly astonished at the drinking capacities of the papás. There was no other service in the church that night: this was well; but one could not help wondering how their heads would feel when they rose, in the early hours, for the first of their ceremonies. They threw off all restraint, and clinked my glass one after the other with the rollicking vehemence of so many Bacchanals, shouting: "Egeia!" "Salut!" (your health!) or "Kalo katevodi!" (good journey!) until I gave up the attempt to respond severally to each individual civility, and took to nodding and sipping indeterminately. Nor was the Hegúmenos a whit behindhand in joviality. He seemed indeed to enjoy the fun hugely, and laughed uproariously at this or that papá whose filmy eyes, red face, looseness of attitude, or incoherence of speech marked him as a man who had taken one glass more than he could carry with grace; and he was as pleasantly officious in trying to make the stranger drunk (I cannot help saying it) as any of them.

This wild riot continued until within half-an-hour of bed-time. And when, at length, the table and wine were deserted, each papá chose his favourite seat on the divans which lined the room, and, dragging his chair with him, lounged comfortably on

the cushions, and tilted the chair for the convenience of his resting feet. Cigarettes were lighted, and talk of a soberer kind ensued, though two or three of the papás now and then gave vent to their lightness of heart in a ringing burst of laughter.

In brief, one could almost believe that Master Rabelais would find himself very much at home and amused in a monastery like that of the Hagia Triadha.

My impressions of the papás and their domestic life was so pleasurable up to the time of going to bed, that I am sorry it was somewhat leavened by dissatisfaction in the night which followed. The servitor conducted me to the guest room over the refectory, which it equalled in length and breadth, and with a gentle "bon soir, monsieur," left me to my fate. And truly, for a man who loves clean linen and solitude during the dark hours, no experience could be less enjoyable than mine until cock-crow the next morning. There were six beds in the dormitory, and, after much deliberation and doubt, I chose that which seemed the least dirty. But I shall long remember the Hagia Triadha fleas, and the fever of unrest of that night.

In due time, however, day broke with sweet tranquillity, and I left my bed to its earlier occupants. From my row of windows I could see the White Mountains already gleaming under the sunlight, and the vines, the long grass, the barley patches, and the blossoms close at hand sparkling with dew. No bell had called the papás from their beds, but long ago they had all been up, all save the Papá Theodosios, and engaged in one or other of the multifarious employments which make the pastoral and religious life in combination so good for the body and mind of man.

I stepped from my room on to the inner corridor of the monastery. The sun had warmed the quadrangle thus early. By the portal of the building a knot of little scholars in blue gowns were conning their lessons with a low continuous murmur. The two or three old gentlemen who had delighted me yesterday in their gala dresses, were to-day sleepily sunning themselves by the orange trees, in the rags and tatters of mendicants; and birds were singing among the trees within and all over the land outside the monastery.

Returning, I found the servitor waiting for me. He was certainly a good lad, and well furnished with that endowment of veneration for others, which Mr. Ruskin

holds to be so worthy an attribute in a man or a boy. I expressed a wish to wash, and he did his best for me, though he seemed to think that I was over-particular. He fetched an article like an antique coffee-pot, and with this he poured bracing spring-water upon me till I told him to stop. When this was finished he brought me an early meal of Turkish delight and coffee, and murmured a few words of French, with a wry look over his shoulder to see that he was not observed. It was good, in conclusion, to see the light of gratitude in his eyes when I told him to persevere with the Grammar, and not be deterred by the jealousy of his more ignorant seniors.

I have nothing more to say about my visit to the Hagia Triadha. There was much hand-shaking when I left. The Hegúmenos received my dole "for the good of the Church," and gave me a pink rose in return; and then, accompanied through the olive woods by my friends, the Papás Elias and Constantinos (carolling like one of the birds on the olive twigs), I walked back over the breezy sunlit plateau of Akrotiri to Khalepa by Canea.

SOUTH AFRICAN SKETCHES.

SNAKES.

"THAT story ain't bad," said the one-eyed man, joining unasked in our conversation, "but I could tell you one worth two of that, about another kind of snake."

We were at the bar of the "Blue Posts," New Rush, Diamond Fields, taking some light alcoholic refreshment before retiring to our tent to turn in for the night, and I had just been narrating to my partner, D——, an adventure which I had had with a puff-adder at Camps Bay. As the adventure itself had not been remarkable for exciting passages of thrilling interest, I had largely drawn upon my imagination to supply these deficiencies; and I flattered myself that I had described a situation so full of astounding and unexpected incidents, and so nearly verging upon the impossible, as to defy competition. I consequently looked incredulously at this one-eyed digger, who was offering to tell a story worth two of mine.

The few men still in the bar—for the night was late for the early hours we kept at the Fields in those days, and who had been hanging with bated breath upon my lips while I told them how I got the puff-

adder out of the leg of my trousers, into which it had wriggled while I was asleep—with the proverbial fickleness of the mob, now turned from me, and dressing their faces in set expressions of the keenest interest, called upon my rival to "go ahead" and "fire away." A confirmed dipsomaniac, too, who had for some time been making spasmodic attempts to take a tumbler of fluid in his wandering hand, suddenly pulled himself together, poured the spirit down his throat, and turning towards him with a comprehensive smile, said in a semi-falsetto voice, that "he thors' the g'nleman shd 'blige hon'rble comp'ny."

The one-eyed man asked for nothing better, and being thus adjured, at once commenced.

"I ain't an Old Colony chap; I'm a Natalian, born and bred. I used to live at Camperdown, near Maritzburg, a place which no doubt you've heard of, if you haven't seen. Well, about the end of October, a matter of two years ago, I had to go up to Maritzburg to see about a new diesel-boom for my waggon. I rode up; I had a very good horse, foaled by one of those mares that Joe Gage had down at Pinetown—mares that every one in Natal knows of, I should think.

"I don't know if you're acquainted with the road between Camperdown and Maritzburg, but I had just crossed the First Spruit, and was trotting easy along, when my horse shied, nearly chucking me; and on looking to see what was up, I saw a black mamba sliding down the hill-slope on my right. Now, the black mamba is about as nasty a snake as you'll find in Natal, and we can show as pretty a collection of those reptiles as you'll get in any country. He ain't like other snakes, what won't trouble you unless you trouble them, by treading on them or frightening them somehow; but he'll go for you, just out of pure wickedness, if you so much as happen to cross the road in front of him. I, of course, knew all about them; but this one was so far off, more'n thirty yards from the road, that I never thought he'd trouble his head about me; so I just cursed the horse a bit, and went on.

"I hadn't gone a rod before the horse began sweating and trembling all over. I thought it must be another snake, but I couldn't see one anywhere on hand, so I turned in the saddle to look at the chap I had just passed. Would you believe it, friends? There he was, not five yards off

in the road, follering along as hard as he could pelt, and with his nose down, picking up the 'spoor' like a hound. I didn't feel frightened—no, not a bit. In fact, why should I? There was I, mounted; and I thought to myself that no snake that was ever hatched could keep up with a horse; so I lifted the nag a bit and trotted out, so as to get clear of the reptile and leave it behind.

"After I had gone about a quarter of a mile I looked round again—I don't know why, for I didn't expect to see anything—when s'help me if there wasn't that snake again, keeping up with me, and p'raps gaining a little. It beat all I had ever heard of; but I wasn't alarmed, not as yet, and I just cantered on, looking round to see what the snake would do.

"The first two or three strides carried me well away from him, and I was just waving my hand to him so as to say, 'So 'long, old man, sorry I can't stop,' you know, when, may I never speak again, if I didn't see that mamba curl his tail up in the air over his head, then twist his neck back, take a grip of his tail with his back teeth, and come trundling alone in the road after me, for all the world just like a child's hoop.

"You can say, without error, that I was startled, in fact considerably so, and I cantered out, still keeping my eye well on the mamba. He went along quite easy, running smoothly like, and it appeared as if he was enjoying the fun and didn't want to hurry himself; only, when any sharp stone, or bit of thorn in the road, seemed to annoy him, he would make a spurt and come on a bit nearer.

"I got round the mountain, and was in the straight bit to Maritzburg, the mamba follering all the way at about the same distance, when I thought that the game was getting played out, and that I might just as well gallop away from him. Accordingly I went on full pelt for about a mile, and then slowed down to give the horse a breather, for the day was powerful hot, when hang me if the mamba didn't suddenly appear out of the cloud of dust we had kicked up, trundling along as happy as ever, only he appeared to be losing temper a bit, having got scratched no doubt through going faster, or p'raps being vexed at having to hurry.

"Friends! I began to feel sick then. I thought really that I should never be able to shake off the infernal thing, and I drove both spurs home and went on again at full

gallop. Still, as fast as I could go, that mamba seemed to go faster. The horse was lathered with foam; the rocks and grass at the road-side seemed to fly past me; but still that cursed black hoop came rolling along about five or six yards behind me.

"I clattered across the bridge outside Maritzburg, and raced up the street. I could see all the people running like mad into their houses, slamming their doors and shutting their down-stairs' windows. They had seen the mamba following me. Some of them went and took seats at the top windows of their houses, so as to have a better view of the hunt, and I thought I heard some of them giving odds on the snake. Up the street I went like a streak of light, and the mamba, having had enough sport no doubt, was now gaining on me every moment, and evidently meaning mischief. I was just passing the Crown Hotel, which, as p'raps you know, stands back a bit from the road, when a chap, amongst a crowd of others who were watching me from the upstairs windows, yelled out, 'Turn a corner sharp, you blamed fool. It's your only chance.'

"Friends! those words were like an inspiration. I just managed to wrench the horse's head round, and to turn down a cross street, and the mamba, seeing he would lose me, straightened himself out; made a leap; and fell short; just bit a few hairs out of the nag's tail, nothing more. I didn't stop till I'd gone a good half mile; and then, seeing no more of the snake, I turned back. Gosh! it makes me hot to think of it now."

We remained silent at the conclusion of this strange story, and the one-eyed digger looked round at us while mopping his forehead, for he had grown warm with the recital. The awkward silence was broken by the dipsomaniac. Raising his head from the liquor-besprinkled and dirty boards which did duty for a counter, he waved his hand graciously towards the digger, and said:

"'Pears to me, to be duty d'volved 'pon me to r'turn thanks of hon'rble comp'ny. Mo' int'resting story—mo' int'resting. Ber you hav'nt said what b'came of ole woman."

We were beginning to breathe again, with a sense of relief from restraint, when the storyteller once more spoke.

"It's a queer yarn, isn't it?" he enquired. "Sounds almost incredible, don't it?"

"Yes, it does—almost," said my partner.
 "Still," continued the one-eyed digger, "it's as true as gospel—every word of it. I hope none of you don't think as I've been lying."

"Oh, no—certainly not."

"Because, if so as anyone of you did think so, and would like to put words to it, we can soon see who's the best man outside."

And he began to roll up his shirt-sleeves and expose a pair of brawny, sunburnt arms.

We all believed it to be a stupendous lie; but was it worth while to incur the risk of receiving a couple of black eyes, or perhaps of being reduced to the monocular condition of this romancer, simply for the satisfaction of telling him that we considered him to have been guilty of unmitigated mendacity? No, certainly not. Besides, had not the proverb, or some deceased fogey, said "*Magna est veritas et praevalabit*?" Very well, then; let "*veritas*" manage its own business, and prevail. It was nothing to do with us. So we all agreed as we left the "Blue Posts," and went along the dusty road round the base of the "kopje" to our tents.

RICH AND FREE!

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

I WAS a whole day at Dover.

I regretted this; regretted losing the morning boat. But I could not see how I could carry out my plan more quickly and as safely. I avoided the great hotel, and went to a small, quiet inn, at which I had once stayed—years ago. Again I kept my room all day, till dusk. I should have forgotten to order any food, had I not been asked what I would take. As it was, I doubt if I ate anything—I can't remember that I did.

I had a fire lighted, and burnt the larger part of the papers and letters I had with me. But I put a pocket-book, containing some of my cards and some notes, of no importance, addressed to me, in the pocket of my travelling cloak. This, which was not black, it was my intention to leave with my hat upon the beach when I should have bought myself another cloak and a widow's bonnet!

My childish and futile plan had not even any originality; I remembered having read of something like it some years back.

About two hours before the steamer in which I had taken my passage was to start, I paid my bill and left the inn—saying that I had a friend to visit in the town. Finding myself too much encumbered with clothing, I left my mantle in a drawer of the room I had occupied. Trifling as that detail was, it much exercised my mind, far more than larger things. Should I give it to the chambermaid? To do that would look strange and cause speculation. Should I just leave it lying, as if I had simply forgotten it? No, it might be seen too soon, someone might start to look for me; so I shut it in an empty drawer.

I thought I knew where the shop I wanted was, but I could not immediately find it, and began to fear I was losing too much time. Then when I found it, how slow the people were, how talkative and inquisitive! But at last I got what I required—required immediately, for a friend, I said—a widow's bonnet with a long crape veil, and a long black cloak which would completely cover me. I took them away, in spite of much remonstrance, and many offers to send them instantly, to any address. Significant glances, or so I fancied, were exchanged among the women in the shop. I fancied, too, I heard a murmur about some "accident."

I made them just pin the bonnet in a paper bag, and the cloak I took upon my arm.

Oh dear! How difficult concealment is! How wonderful it is that crime goes ever undetected! It was now quite dark. The lamps had been some time lighted. Yet I could find no place where there were not people about. I wandered to and fro on the beach, getting feverishly agitated, and always, just as I thought myself safe from observation, came a voice or a step.

At last I drew reckless. It was getting so late. I stopped in the darkest spot I could find, put on the bonnet and changed my cloak; laid my own cloak and my hat among some seaweed, just, as I hoped, above high-water mark, and hurried, only just in time, on board the packet. Safe and free! as I said again and again. It was a rough passage; but though I am generally ill at sea on the slightest provocation, that night I was only roused to a sense of exhilaration by the strife of wind and wave. I remember that I was visited by what I thought an inspiration, a grand idea for a novel, but what it was I have never since been able to recall.

I was almost the last person to leave the boat when we were in Calais harbour; having no luggage to trouble about, I kept my seat till all the rush and bustle were over.

As I stepped on shore I saw, standing just under the light of a lamp, my travelling companion on that long past day of a previous existence. Had I had the presence of mind to pull my black veil over my face, she would not have recognised me. But—I am thankful to say—all presence of mind failed me. I stumbled against an inequality in the plank and should have fallen but for a man's hand which seized my arm and pulled me safe ashore.

"Pulled me safe ashore!" That moment, that incident, constantly recurs to me. For, of course, the man whose grasp had saved me was with her, belonged to her.

"Harold, hadn't we better put her into the train? She has been ill, I expect; she seems faint and giddy. Are you alone? Take my husband's arm; let him help you."

Then, suddenly, she recognised me, in spite of my disguise. There was a solemn, shining significance in her starry eyes as she bent down to me, and said:

"Something dreadful has happened to you. What can we do? In what way can we help you?"

"No, no, nothing has happened. You cannot help me; at least only by forgetting that you have seen me. Just let me lose myself. I beg you, do not look for me—do not look after me—just let me disappear."

I passed quickly from her sight, and hid myself among the throng.

This encounter greatly, and not altogether unpleasantly, disturbed me.

Where was she going, I wondered, when I had, just at the last moment, seated myself in a railway-carriage. I was intending, as far as I had any intention, to go first to Paris, then to Geneva—and then—well—what manner of existence I should be able to plan for myself seemed to me more and more difficult to picture. I had thought of Geneva, because there I had some knowledge of people who might put me in the way of earning a livelihood. But now I remembered that "I" was drowned upon the beach at Dover, and that I must shun, not seek, any former acquaintance.

I put off planning anything beyond Paris. I was too tired, I told myself, to be able to think to any profit.

That encounter had shaken me! And

then the closeness of the railway-carriage sickened me after the freshness of the night air at sea. A deadly exhaustion came upon me, I could struggle no more. Why had I not really done what I wished it to be supposed I had done—just drowned myself? But it could always come to that. And I saw my own figure standing on a bridge under which rushed a mighty torrent of clear, cold, green Alpine water. One spring—and here I lost consciousness, either swooning or falling asleep.

When I came to myself, my fellow-travellers were speaking with considerable excitement (accentuated by the fact that, but for this or that, one or other of them might have been in it!) of a terrible railway accident that had happened in England, accounts of which were filling the papers. What they said made little impression upon me, but I dimly connected it with the looks and words of the women in the Dover shop, where I had bought my widow's bonnet. It occurred to me that they had, perhaps, thought the bonnet was wanted for some one whom that accident had widowed!

By-and-by a lady, next whom I was sitting, offered me one of the papers she had been reading. I received it because I did not like to show so little human interest as to decline it. I began to read listlessly what she pointed to, my mind being very little present with me. But, by-and-by, a little dull excitement was roused by the fact that the collision had been on the line on which we were to have travelled, and on the same evening; though, as far as I could understand, it was not "our train," but a later one which had been wrecked. I returned the paper, with some vague comment. But it was refolded, and given back to me with the words:

"Here are the fuller details, and the list of killed and wounded."

Fuller details, indeed, ghastly details, and a long list of sufferers. Among the list of those "fatally injured," was the name of the man whom I had married on the morning preceding the night of this fearful disaster. As she handed me the paper her finger seemed to point to just that name!

Of course! Why else had she given me the paper? I had a feeling that she must know all about me. But, when I looked towards her, she was taking no heed of me, but talking eagerly to her friends. I pulled down my veil. I leant back my head in my corner; the paper slipped to the floor.

What did I think? What did I feel? Almost nothing, I fancy. Certainly nothing with any sense in it. First came a confused notion that his name there was a mistake, an inaccuracy, as that was certainly not "our train." Then—"you see, you need not have done it. It was going to be done for you"—was a thought which presented itself with some distinctness, to be instantly followed by so strong a consciousness of its almost blasphemous absurdity that I nearly laughed aloud.

I was very slow in grasping the idea, that, in the search for me, he must have lost "our train"—the safe train that, no doubt, had uneventfully reached its destination; that but for me, he would not have been in this fatal train; that, in fact, it was I who had caused his death. When, at last, this was all clear to me, a sudden sense of horror went to my heart, and seemed to stop it.

I fancy consciousness was a good while suspended. When it returned, we were stopping at a station. I was alone in the carriage and the door was open. The wind was blowing freshly in upon me. My fellow-travellers had, doubtless, concluded that I was asleep.

A garçon was offering coffee. Its steaming fragrance made me feel as if a drink of it would be as life to me. And yet I doubted if I could stir my hand to take it, or even open my lips to ask for it.

At that moment *she* was passing by. I have little doubt she was on the look-out for me. She stopped, looked in, hesitated a moment, then stepped in: too much the good Samaritan, too much my guardian angel, to pass me by.

I had managed to throw back my veil; probably my face was ghastly enough; probably my eyes met hers imploringly.

"There is something I can do for you?"

The next minute she was holding the coveted draught to my lips. I inhaled the fragrance of it before I had power to swallow it. She waited beside me, holding the cup for me till it was empty. She paid for it, and then seated herself beside me.

"I cannot leave you like this; you look so terribly changed and ill. Something very dreadful has happened to you, I fear. If I can help you, let me, either with or without telling me what it is. Only," she added, "I know you will not ask me to help you to do anything wrong."

I pointed to the newspaper.

"Someone dear to you killed in that fearful collision?"

"No; oh no."

She had picked up the paper. I pointed to a name.

"That is?" she questioned.

"My husband." I made myself call him that. I had some strange feeling as of making him some slight compensation in calling him that. Compensation to him or penance to myself? I don't know which, or whether it was either—recalling all this confuses me. I must hasten on.

"But," she began perplexedly, "I cannot understand this."

And she touched my widow's bonnet.

"Oh!" I gasped, "I must just tell you all. I was mad, or I could not have married him. I was mad, anyway, directly it was done; and I ran away from him. This was bought for a disguise. He must have lost his train looking for me. That's why he was in this one. That is why he was killed; that is how it is I who killed him."

She turned very white, and her eyes dilated with a sort of horror.

She did not speak directly; then she said:

"He was not killed, you see. It says 'fatally injured.' He is lying in the—Hospital, fatally injured." She paused again, and then: "And now? What will you do now?" she asked me.

"That is what you must tell me."

"That I cannot presume to do. But you must remember he may linger some time, perhaps unconscious, but perhaps conscious. Might it not be to him some solace, some relief, to see you? And to you, afterwards, might it not be some satisfaction to have given him, at such a time, such solace?"

"You mean I must go to him?"

I had known she would make me do this. And yet I was ready to shriek out that this, just this, I could not do; that, even if I had loved him, I could not have done this!

But neither could I have told her of my cowardly repugnance to be brought in contact with physical suffering; of the horror and disgust produced in me by the very name of a hospital.

"The more painful this is to you the more satisfaction you may afterwards derive from having made the sacrifice," she said with a sort of severe gentleness; and added a moment after: "That, after all, is but a selfish argument. Do you not feel impelled to go to him simply out of compassion for him?"

"No. I cannot do it."

I spoke with slow sullenness, all the time knowing that I had to do it; that I should do it.

I looked up into her face. She had risen and was standing over me; she met my gaze with a steady, almost stern look.

"I think you can do it. I think you will do it! But you must decide quickly. In ten minutes this train will start again. I must speak to my husband. I see him there. I will return to you almost directly. You will have made up your mind."

I had no mind to make up. I had just to do what she required of me. I watched them as they talked. She put one hand on his arm, with the other she had taken hold of the lapel, or of a button, of his coat. She spoke earnestly, pleadingly. He, at first seemed to remonstrate, his face expressing tender tolerance of her vehemence, and some amusement. After a few moments he grew grave, attentive, compliant.

"How those two love each other!" I thought.

He moved quickly away; she came back to me. She did not now get into the carriage, but held her hand out to me. She smiled, and yet her expression was of great solemnity. I took her hand and alighted. She possessed herself of my bag.

"You have decided, I see, to return. We—my husband and I—will go back with you to take care of you, to see you safely over your journey."

"It is all right," he said presently, coming up to her. "All right about our luggage. I have arranged it all. And this lady, you say, has none."

I awoke to some slight sense of the enormity of my selfishness in allowing these two strangers—veritable good Samaritans—to derange their plans and sacrifice their convenience for an unknown lunatic!

My feeble remonstrance was met by her telling me that it was of little consequence; that they were travelling for pleasure; and that they would find their pleasure in being of use to a suffering fellow-creature. As she spoke she tucked my hand under her arm and led me to the waiting-room.

It is curious how some physical sensations linger in the memory. I often recall the inexpressible comfort caused me by the contact of my cold inert hand with her warm body and beating heart. In the waiting-room she put me on a couch and over red me over heedfully. While she was till hovering about me her husband came

to us—a lordly-looking man, of fine presence and commanding air, with a singularly-penetrating eye. I fancied a good deal of likeness between them, and should have judged them brother and sister. But I believe now that the resemblance was entirely in expression, in the souls looking out of them.

"We have forty-five minutes to wait, Hetty. You will come and breakfast with me. This lady can be served where she is." Turning to me he added, "I shall send you a little soup and some wine, and you will be so good as to take what I send you." Oh, the difference of face and voice to me, to her!

"My husband is a doctor, you must know," she explained, feeling, for me, the somewhat stern stateliness of his manner, "and so, of course, he must be obeyed."

Coming back to me about half-an-hour after, she looked at the empty bowl and glass, and nodded her satisfaction.

"That is good and brave of you. My husband will be pleased."

Her way with him was wonderful to me.

"If my King approve you, what more could you desire?" was what her words implied.

Well, I cannot—though one part of me seems to long to do so—go into the details of that strange return journey. I must confess what, perhaps, I ought to be ashamed to remember, that I was, in some hitherto unknown way, singularly happy. I was thought for and cared for by two creatures who belonged to a superior order of intelligence from any I had yet encountered on my life-journey. I seemed to breathe an air more delicate and ethereal than I had ever before inhaled, and to be myself exalted by the distinction with which I was treated.

Till now I had chiefly had to be on my guard and on the defensive in my intercourse with my fellows, often with a sense of my hand against every man's, because every man's was against mine.

The feverishness of the preceding days had burnt out now, and had consumed all my strength with it. I felt as weak as an infant, and I yielded to my weakness. Everything was done for me, thought of for me. I had the delicious rest of being with people whom I could absolutely trust, who seemed to me absolutely good, absolutely wise. I must say, however, that all the tenderness of my treatment was due to her. I felt from

the very first that her husband did not like me, and did not like the intimacy of her kindness to me. Of course he was quite in his right.

Once, in the night, from the bathos of "the swooning sickness on the dismal sea," I came to the surface of consciousness with such an extraordinary sense of mental well-being, as might—so it appeared to me—be a premonition of what is felt by the "happy dead" "waking in the Lord." At least such thoughts, thoughts about such things, come to me when I recall the experience, though, as a rule, "no need for such thoughts yet," has been more my way.

She was holding me in her arms; I was conscious of her warmth and fragrance. The husband was bending over me, his finger on my pulse.

"Great prostration. You must get her to swallow some brandy," were the words that roused me to the actual present, in a sufficiently mundane manner.

That journey was over all too soon for me. They went with me to its very end, to the very threshold, the thought of crossing which was as a nightmare to me. Before they took me to the hospital she got her husband to go there first, while she made me get all possible rest and refreshment at an hotel. It was due to her thought, too, not mine, that I now discarded my widow's bonnet for other head-gear.

When he came back to us he told her—he seldom spoke directly to me, and this, I thought, was one of the signs of his distaste for me—what he had learnt.

"Still alive, generally quite conscious and collected. The injuries being chiefly spinal, there is nothing to shock the eye. He has constantly asked for her. They say this would be a favourable time for an interview. Agitation to be as far as possible avoided, as likely to bring on the paroxysms of suffering which recur at intervals. Can she go now? It is some distance. I have ordered a carriage to the door."

I stood up, saying that I was ready. Not for the world would I have had them know the intense and utter selfishness of the emotion which turned me sick and faint.

When we were there, when they had helped me from the carriage and up some stairs, so frantic a terror was on me that, but for very shame, I should even then have refused to face him. But they never left me till the ward-door had opened and a nurse had led me in.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

AUGUST.

AUGUST is undoubtedly one of the two most pleasant months of the year, when relaxation may be safely sought from the labour of the preceding twelve. It is one of the months of fruit and flowers, and the month of harvest.

By the Romans this month was called *Sextilis*, until the Emperor Augustus, in the year 8 B.C., gave to it his own name, by which it has since been known. The Emperor was not born in this month, but the principal events—the chief triumphs—of his life were achieved in it. He assumed his first consulship of Rome; subdued Egypt; and terminated the civil war in Rome in the month of August; and, following the example of his uncle, Julius, gave to the month his name. Up to this time the month had thirty days; but Augustus, evidently thinking it ought to be one of the long months, took a day from the already shortened month of February, and made it thirty-one. At the same time September and November were each deprived of a day, which were added to October and December. The Saxons called August "Arn," or "Barn Monath," in reference to the filling of their barns with corn. "Arn" is the Saxon word for harvest. It is also stated that the month was called "Woe Monath," as the early Saxons also called it June.

The appearance of shooting stars on August the tenth was observed in the Middle Ages, when they were termed Saint Lawrence's Tears.

August, for all its sunshine and bright golden grain, had but a sorry reputation amongst the ancients, and I find in one calendar two "dies mala," and in another five, pretty well distributed throughout the month. It opens on an unlucky day, and then nothing troubles it until the fifteenth, according to one authority; the nineteenth, according to another. The remaining days (both authorities are agreed as to the nineteenth) are twentieth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth. The second Monday in August is also an unlucky day, the reason assigned being that, on this day, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

With regard to the unlucky days, it is recorded in the Cottonian manuscripts, Vitell., c. viii., p. 20: "Three days there are in the year which we call Egyptian days, that is, in our language dangerous

days, on any occasion whatever to the blood of man or beast. In the month which we call April, the last Monday; and then is the second, at the coming of the month we call August; then is the third, which is the third Monday of the going out (or the last fifteen days of the month) of the month of December. He who on this day reduces blood, be it of man, be it of beast, this we have heard say that, speedily on the first or seventh day, his life will end. Or if his life be longer, so that he will not come to the seventh day; or if he drink some time in these three days, he will end his life; and should he taste goose-flesh within forty days' space, his life will be end."

The precious stone set apart for wearing in this month is the cornelian, which, appropriately enough, denotes a contented mind.

Wear a sardonyx, or for thee
No conjugal felicity;
The August born, without this stone,
'Tis said, must live unloved and lone.

So sang a superstitious poet, and no doubt quite as much luck is attendant upon wearing sardonyx in August as upon wearing the cornelian.

Those who are given to grumbling if the month of August be wet, will do well to bear in mind that "a wet August never brings dearth." Though, on the other hand, it is equally certain that

Dry August and warm,
Doth harvest no harm.

We are informed that St. Bartholomew (August the twenty-fourth) "brings the cold dew," and that

All the tears St. Swithin can cry,
St. Bartelmy's mantle wipes dry.

Also that

If Bartelmy's day be fair and clear,
Hope for a prosperous autumn that year.

The first day of the month was always, as the first Monday is now, a feast or holiday, though not always of so popular a character as now. Our forefathers knew the day as "the gule of August," and "Lammas Day."

This was formerly one of the Quarter days of the year. Whitsuntide came first, Lammas next, Martinmas next, and Candlemas last. Some rents are still paid on this day, particularly in Scotland. Formerly on this day our ancestors offered bread made of new wheat, while those tenants who held land of the Cathedral of York were, by tenure, to bring a lamb alive into the Church, which was dedicated to Saint Peter ad Vincula, at High Mass on

this day. Some derive the name from Lamb Mass, because of the foregoing, while others derive it from a supposed tything of lambs at this season. Blount says that it is called "Klaf Mass," that is "Loaf Mass," which signifies a feast of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth. New wheat is called Lammas wheat. Valency affirms that, in Ireland, La-ith-mas was a day dedicated to the sacrifice of the fruits of the earth. It being pronounced La-ee-mas, the word was easily corrupted into Lammas. The term "gule," applied to the day, is of Egyptian origin, and signifies throat. In the form of "cul" or "gul" it was a Celtic word, signifying a festive anniversary.

Cormac, who was Bishop of Cashel in the tenth century, has left it on record that in his time four great fires were lighted up on the four great festivals of the Druids—February, May, August, and November. In all probability Beltane and Lammas were two of these.

The first of August is also the festal day of Saint Peter ad Vincula, instituted in honour of a relic of St. Peter's chains. It is said that if this sacred relic is kissed on the first of August, any disorder of the throat may be cured. There is a legend that a daughter of the Tribune Quirinus was cured of a troublesome disorder in this simple manner.

The same day is noteworthy through the competition for Doggett's coat and badge, a short account of which may be interesting. In the year after George the First came to the throne, Thomas Doggett, a comedian, who was zealously attached to the House of Hanover, gave a waterman's coat and badge to be rowed for by six Thames watermen on the anniversary of the King's accession to the throne, the first of August. At his death, Doggett bequeathed a certain sum of money, the interest of which was to be appropriated for ever to the purchase of a like coat and badge, to be rowed for in honour of the day. The competition is still kept up.

The following verse was written on a window-pane of a waterside house at Lambeth, during the race on the First of August, 1736:

Tom Doggett, the greatest sly droll in his parts,
In acting was certain a Master of Arts;
A monument left, and no tribute is fuller,
His praise is sung yearly by many a sculler.
Ten thousand years hence, if this world lasts so long,
Tom Doggett will still be the theme of their song.

Until a recent period, the hopping of swans on the River Thames was annually

observed on the first of August. At the close of the last century six wherries were sent as far as Marlow, properly manned, to count and mark the swans. In the present century, however, it became, on the first Monday in August, a festive journey by the citizens as far as Staines, and the trip is termed "swan-hopping," a corruption of swan-upping, or, going up to or taking up the young swans to mark them. The origin of this custom is found in the fact that every swan found in certain portions of the river or sea was claimed as Crown property, the bird being under Kingly patronage, and regarded as Royal. The first Royal decree we find relating to the "upping" is that of Elizabeth, who ordered them to be taken up once a year for the purpose of being marked on the skin of the bill, before the King's swanherd. This consisted of making five nicks, three across the bill and two lengthwise, and afterwards clipping the wings. Swans that were private property, and those belonging to London Companies, were otherwise nicked, and thus gave the names to inns, as, "The Swan with Two Necks," or, as it was originally, "Two Nicks."

Of our own Bank Holiday I need hardly speak, it is so well known, and has so recently been established. Previous to the Act which made the first Monday in August a general holiday, there was no break between Whitsuntide and Christmas.

Passing over nine intervening days we come to the day of Saint Lawrence, the tenth of August. This is a holy day in the Roman Calendar, to commemorate the death of the saint who was martyred under Valentinian, about 373, A.D., by being burnt to death on a gridiron. It is said that while suffering the agonies of burning he turned to his inhuman executioners and asked them to turn him, as the one side was sufficiently roasted. On Saint Lawrence's Day, 1557, the Spaniards gained a decisive victory over their enemies at Saint Quentin, and, in honour of the event, Philip the Second commenced, in 1563, and completed in 1586, the Escorial, the palace of the sovereigns of Spain, at a cost of ten million pounds. It is built in the shape of a gridiron, and the total length of the rooms and apartments exceeds one hundred and twenty English miles. It comprises in itself a church, mausoleum, monastery, palace, library, and museum. It was struck by lightning and caught fire on the first of October, 1872, when great damage was done to the building. The

Church of Saint Lawrence Jewry is dedicated to this saint, and has a gridiron on the steeple for a vane.

On the eleventh day the crusade against dogs ends, dog-days being over.

August the fifteenth is a red-letter day in the Romish calendar, and was formerly a festival in the Church of England, in which calendar it still occupies a place. It was instituted in the year 813 to celebrate the ascension of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven. In Catholic countries there are gorgeous ceremonies and splendid processions on this day.

We pass on now to the twenty-fourth, the Feast of Saint Bartholomew.

This saint, who was one of the Apostles, was martyred about 71, A.D., and his festival was instituted 1130. The day is chiefly remembered through the terrible massacre of the Huguenots, which commenced in Paris on the night of this festival. Sully, the French historian, says that seventy thousand Protestants, including women and children, were murdered throughout the Kingdom of France by secret orders from the weak-minded Charles the Ninth, at the instigation of his mother, Queen Dowager Catherine de' Medici. Above five hundred persons of rank and ten thousand of inferior condition perished in Paris alone. Pope Gregory the Thirteenth ordered a Te Deum to be performed, with other rejoicings. In England, within the recollection of many now living, there used to be a great fair held at Smithfield on this day, called "Bartholomew Fair." The charter was granted by Henry the Second thirty years after the canonisation of Bartholomew. The shows were continued uninterruptedly until 1850, when they were ordered to be discontinued. The fair was proclaimed for the last time in 1855. Not so very long ago there was a prevalent belief that if a sufferer from epilepsy danced all day and all night in the church on the Feast of the Assumption and St. Bartholomew, taking care to fall down as if by accident, and to play a number of other antics, he or she would be cured most thoroughly.

With reference to St. Bartholomew Fair there is a tradition that Rahere, a minstrel of King Henry the First, during a pilgrimage to Rome in 1102, had a vision of St. Bartholomew, and was commanded by him to build, on his return to London, a priory, hospital, and church in Smithfield, or "Smoothfield," then a country spot. Rahere did as he was bidden, and was made

the first Prior of the monastery. It was to this priory that Henry the Second granted the privilege of holding a three days' fair, for the purpose of enabling the clothiers of England and the drapers of London to exhibit their goods. Their booths, which were at first temporary structures, gave place in time to permanent houses, and received the name of Cloth Fair, which name it still retains.

In a legend of the Romish Church, St. Bartholomew is depicted as preaching to natives in the Indies, by whom he is said to have been flayed alive at the instigation of a brother of the King of Armenia. In memory of his death it was customary at monastic institutions, in the Middle Ages, to distribute small knives amongst the people, the knives being credited with the possession of certain virtues.

The last day of August is dedicated in the Romish Calendar to a great Scotch saint, Saint Aidan, who, at the invitation of Oswald, King of Northumbria (Saint Oswald) came from the monastery of Iona to spread the seeds of Christianity where a monk named Corman had failed. On the arrival of Aidan, "the King appointed him his Episcopal see in the Isle of Lindisfarne as he desired, which place, as the tide flows and ebbs twice a day, is enclosed by the waves of the sea like an island, and again twice in the day when the shore is left dry, becomes contiguous to the land."

Aidan's work prospered greatly for seventeen years, and then, on the thirty-first of August, 651, he died of a broken heart, in a hut at the west end of Bamborough Church. His remains were afterwards removed and placed in Lindisfarne Church, on the right side of the altar.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XVII.

TILLY was much too healthy a young woman to be kept sleepless by the unfamiliarity of her surroundings, but when she woke, it was from a dream of home among the green silences of Liliesmuir, and, for a moment, her confused thoughts could not adjust themselves. Then she remembered everything, and, springing out of bed, groped her way to the window. It was still night within, but without a pale, chill dawn struggled feebly with the darkness.

A winter dawn in London carries with it a suggestion of reluctance; it is as if the world were weary and would fain slumber on; in the country there is always the response of bird and beast, a chorus that never omits its greetings; in London, it is the murmur and remonstrance of an overworked multitude; the groan and creak of machinery, the voice of labour and care which rise on the wings of the morning.

Tilly stood at the window till the trees in the square began to show black against the paler atmosphere, and then a sudden resolve possessed her. London was a mystery which still fascinated her; its streets, its people, its endless life and movement, had a haunting charm for her imagination. As yet her explorations had all been made at conventional hours, when the wheels had ceased to creak and everything was in perfect working order; but here was a chance to catch it unawares; to watch the monster stretch its arms, and take off its nightcap, and make its toilet for the day. She made her preparations very quickly, and in a quarter of an hour she was ready. She wrapped herself in a large fur cloak, for, though there was no snow, Christmas was at hand, and the air had a bitter edge.

She took her candle and made her way very softly downstairs. The boarders all slumbered in happy unconsciousness of Tilly's daring project; it was not an early house, as are the boarding-houses where City men do congregate. Madame Drave did not encourage gentlemen of the City, and, in penalty of his profession, the bagman, when at rest from his travels, was compelled to take his morning meal in solitude, and to be content with such fare and unwilling attendance as he could secure.

The other boarders came down about half-past nine, with the exception of little Miss Dicey, who had a tray carried up to her room, so that her morning hours, purged of all distracting elements, might be sacred to literature.

It was thus a house of silence, wrapped in slumber deep as that which hung over Beauty's Palace, through which Tilly crept lightly; the only living thing she met was a black cat, visible at first but as a pair of gleaming eyes. The cat accepted Tilly's caresses with patient dignity, but it refused her invitation to taste the morning air. Cats are unsocial beasts; they have none of the jovial humour that makes a dog a companion always to be relied on, where

adventure is in the wind. So Tilly stepped out alone into the square, still dim with the reluctant, slow-routed night.

The trees hung lean, black arms across the rusty railings which shut in the square garden. In the half-light they looked like hungry, imprisoned eavesdroppers, eager to wrest the secrets from the sleeping houses opposite. They pointed long, skinny fingers at Tilly.

"Look at this girl," they whispered; "who ever saw a girl about at this hour before?"

Tilly began her explorations by walking slowly round the square. She met no one, and her light steps sounded almost loud on the pavement. All the houses were fast-shuttered and shrouded; the night policeman had ceased his prowlings and gone home to bed, and the milkmen were not yet astir. It was very cold, and she quickened her pace.

At the farther side of the square a street branched off, and as it offered a more promising prospect of adventure, she took it. Here, for the first time, signs of life began to greet her. At a corner, where a wide thoroughfare diverged, a coffee-stall was open, and some sons of toil were breakfasting. Tilly paused, with a sudden perception that she was hungry. The coffee smelt good, and the steam of it curled up invitingly in the cold air. She felt in her pocket for her purse, and, finding it, she asked the stall-keeper to serve her too.

Nobody appeared to be astonished; nobody ever is astonished at anybody else in London. The men stared at her, perhaps; but that is the inalienable privilege of the British workman, and she did not mind it; it was a different affair from the staring of the bold clerk in the restaurant of long ago. They drank, and flung down their pence, and shouldered their tools, and went their way; and if Mr. Ruskin and the Society for the Promotion of Beautiful Objects are right, they ought to have carried a new sense of exaltation and refinement with them to the day's toil.

Tilly, too, went her way refreshed and cheered. Before departing, she asked the stall-keeper a question.

"Where can I see the people?" she said.

"What people?" he naturally asked.

"Everybody; anybody. The streets here are very quiet. Are there not other streets where there is more stir and life?"

"If you take the second turning to the left, and the first to the right, and the

second again to the left, you will come to the Brompton Road," he answered; "there is always life enough there."

Tilly obeyed these directions as well as she could, and, though she took a wrong turning here and there, she emerged finally at the desired spot. And here, at last, day met her. The envious night had been vanquished, and a cold, grey light penetrated the street. Behind her the bald front of the Oratory lifted itself unashamed. It claims a foremost place, and does its best to hide the erring parish church, lurking modestly among its graves. Before her stretched the irregular street with an odd blankness of aspect that she had hardly time to realise before it escaped her. For, as if by magic, the day came full-armed, the London day of toil and traffic: covered carts were lumbering already to market; milk-carts were jogging to the squares and crescents; early vendors were extolling their wares.

Tilly might have breakfasted a second time on baked potatoes or roasted chestnuts, and finished up with oranges and apples and sad-looking grapes.

Flowers were offered her by more than one outstretched hand, and, with refreshment for the body and adornment for the person, there was also sustenance for the mind in the shape of the loudly-proclaimed newspaper.

When she had walked for ten minutes, the shops on every side of her were unshuttered; the contents in process of arrangement; the street was no longer blank, it had a very open-eyed and knowing look, and its eastward-moving tide was beginning now to flow steadily. When she turned at last, stepping westward once more, she met it in the face; it seemed to her like the march of an army, this hurry of footsteps, this vision of grave, set faces. It is curious, if one thinks of it, how rarely one meets with a smiling face, and yet there are a thousand things to tickle the humour in every walk one takes abroad.

Tilly had had no particular object to serve in her walk, unless it were to find the shop where she had on that first night unconsciously met her kinsman.

She wanted to bring that old self—that very old, half-forgotten self of two months ago—back again; but she failed to recognise the fateful spot. Perhaps it did not open its doors with the promptitude of its neighbours; perhaps it set itself to entrap the hungry leisure of the home-going clerk rather than to check his hasty outset

towards toil; the fact remains that Tilly found no place that answered to her memories.

She found her cousin, however, which no doubt did quite as well; and she was a great deal less astonished at the meeting than he was, which is rather a surprising statement, considering that he had come this way for the last two months in the faith that he would one day be rewarded by seeing her.

"Why, Cousin John!" she said, gaily, "I was just thinking about you, and here you appear. What a good thing you recognised me, for I should never have picked you out from among all those other black coats and tall hats!"

Any young man might be pleased to hear that a pretty girl had been thinking of him, and John was more than pleased; he was very humbly grateful. She stood smiling up at him with her frank and friendly look, drawing her fur cloak round her pretty shoulders.

"You look as if you had seen a ghost," she remarked.

"I hope not," he said; "because, though I've never met a ghost, I do not think the sight of one would give me any particular pleasure, and——"

"And the sight of me does?" she ended his sentence gaily.

"And the sight of you does; but, all the same, do you think you ought to be walking alone at this hour of day?"

"It appears that I am not to be alone any longer, since you are going with me." She slid her arm into his and he let himself be led away from business, and duty. What cared he, with the touch of her warm fingers on his arm and her laughing glances meeting his?

"Tell me all about it," he said. "Did you come out to post a letter?"

"A letter? Oh, no. I have no one to write to."

"You might write to me," said John, with what he felt to be amazing boldness.

"Well, so I will, when I have anything to say that can't keep. But what is the use of writing when I am going to see you so often? I came out in the dark because I wanted to see the very beginning of the day. I know how it begins in the country, and I wanted to know how it begins here; and I can tell you it isn't half such a good-tempered old world as it is with us. I think London gets up on its wrong side."

"Weren't you afraid?" John asked, not quite liking this recital.

"No, why should I be?" she questioned lightly. She was fearless as Una, because she did not know, or suspect, or question; but he did not quite like it. "I was not afraid, but I was rather cold till I came to a stall where they were selling coffee, and I had some, and that warmed me nicely. The cups were very thick, but the coffee was good. I can recommend it to you, Cousin John. Perhaps," she said, looking up at him as he remained silent, "perhaps that is one of the things I ought not to have done? I don't know if you have noticed it, but almost everything here can be summed up under 'don't.' Cousin Spencer used to tell us what we ought to do; but in London the only thing to remember is what should be left undone."

"Well," said John cheerfully, for her tone was a little vexed, and he could not bear to shadow her brightness, "I don't see why you shouldn't breakfast with the horny-handed son of toil if you've a fancy that way, provided always he knows how to appreciate the honour."

"The real working man never is rude," said Tilly shrewdly. "It is when he stops being a working man that he is insufferable. One of them took my cup from me, and another handed across my penny to the stall-keeper, and what could any gentleman do more? I think it would be a very good thing if some girls would go and breakfast with them every day, and then they wouldn't crowd and push and make bad jokes and light their pipes in one's face."

"Better propose it to the unmissioned woman, who is always looking out for a vocation."

"Well, you needn't laugh, sir; it is a very bright idea. By-and-by the ladies might pour out the coffee themselves, and that would be better still. When I had left my working men I found a poor woman who had been sleeping all night on a door-step—think of it, John, in this weather! And a policeman was scolding her and making her get up, just for all the world as if he thought she had been too comfortable. Oh, what a nice feather-bed that door-step must have been! I waited till he had gone, and ran after her and told her about the coffee-stall."

"And how much did you give her, Tilly?"

"Only a shilling. I thought she might as well have the chance of six comfortable breakfasts. For the extra penny you get a large slice of bread, you know."

"I'm afraid she would take her comfort all in a piece, and not in coffee and bread. Oh, Tilly, Tilly, if this is the way you are going to behave, you will have all the London beggars flocking after you. Here's this rogue now, whom I have known for the last dozen years; you see how confidently he holds out his hand when you come in sight?"

"But I am not going to give him anything," she said, passing the pavement artist with a grave, unrelenting look, "and I will tell you why. When I came this way quite early, another man was making the pictures by the light of a lantern. I stood and watched him; and this one, you see, keeps touching them up with a piece of chalk, as if he were the real artist. No," she shook her head, "I cannot encourage Pretence."

"Then you may strike this woman, too, from your list of charities, for, to my certain knowledge, that baby she carries never grows any older. It is always the same age, and it is always crying; and a baby that never grows a day older, Tilly, is as rare a phenomenon as the Flying Dutchman, who could not die."

"Poor, unhappy babies!" said the girl, "what becomes of them when they grow too old to be objects of compassion? Where did they come from, and where do they go to?"

"That is a question very few people about here think of asking; perhaps the answer would be too disagreeable."

"Where are the virtuous, and the happy, and the contented poor, one reads about?" she demanded. "Do they only exist in books? We had no beggars at Liliesmuir, and I have counted twenty since we met this morning."

"The scum always comes to the top, you know," he answered lightly, anxious not to damp her bright spirits. "The virtuous poor stay at home and work."

"Well, here is a blind man who can't work; there can be no harm in giving to him. We'll make a bargain, Cousin John; we'll draw the line at trade, and at blind people, or people without arms and legs. Selling is an honourable occupation, and buying is a delightful one; there never was anything to buy at home. But since you are such a severe moralist, John, you needn't do anything but look on, and I will choose a button-hole for you to wear in the City. It must be very dull in a bank, so I'll choose violets, because they smell sweet and make you think of the country."

"They will make me think of you, and that will be better still. Will you pin them in their place for me, Tilly?"

"Then you must come home with me. Here is the square. Come and have breakfast with us. Uncle and I are going to have it by ourselves."

"I can't, possibly."

"Not even to see the boarders—our fellow boarders? Not even to be questioned by Mrs. Moxon? Ah, you don't know what a pleasure that is."

"Not even for that felicity." He would have liked very well to go, but they had wandered deviously on their way to the square, talking of the unexplored past which each had to explain, and he was already shamefully late. There were trouble and reproach waiting for him at the bank; but he cared nothing for that—nothing at all; he was growing quite reckless, this dutiful young man, but even for him the line must be drawn somewhere. He drew it at a second breakfast. Perhaps, too, the thought of his uncle came to his aid. There would be no very genial welcome from him. But he walked with Tilly to Yarrow House, and there on the door-step, to the lively wonder and curiosity of Mr. Runciman, who was peeping over the half-blind, she pinned the violets in his coat.

"Good-bye," she said, nodding at him; "and you won't forget to come for me on Saturday!"

"I won't forget," he said, going away with a heart that thumped curiously under the violets. In all his uneventful life he had never felt like this before; but then, perhaps, he had never before met a Tilly.

The trees in the garden seemed still to point to her as she stood on the steps, but now they whispered to each other: "It was a lover she went out to meet." No doubt Mr. Runciman, who was a young man of quick conclusions, thought so too, as he rushed to open the door with a politeness that was possibly tempered with curiosity. It is a little too bad when you have a sly reputation as a breaker of hearts, to find your occupation already forestalled.

There was no escaping the breakfast party, even if Tilly had been minded that way. Honoria flew out upon her from the open dining-room door.

"Where have you been at this hour?" she cried; and she drew Tilly into the dining-room where further greetings awaited her.

Major Drew—his napkin tucked under

his chin—was slicing the ham. It was a matter of private rejoicing among the boarders when Madame Drave breakfasted in her own room. Between this circumstance and the ham there is a closer connection than may appear. On the days when she elected to be present, the ham escaped lightly, but the temper of the household suffered.

Major Drew flourished his wrist gracefully as one delicate shaving after another curled off his knife. Carving was to him one of the fine arts.

"Come away, my dear," cried his jolly wife. "Here is the Major who can make a ham go further than any waiter in London can."

"Matty!" growled the Major.

"You know you can, my dear. He is proud to have a new admirer, Miss Burton, and he'll serve you first. You must be hungry, out so early."

"I am not hungry, thank you," said Tilly, "I had some coffee outside."

"Tilly!" exclaimed Honoria; and Mrs. Moxon looked up from her newspaper with a whole volume of questions in her glance.

"Yes," Tilly looked with laughing eyes at her friend. "Outside—in the street—Honoria, with about twenty working-men for company."

"Alone!" gasped Honoria.

"Alone, certainly. I met my cousin later; if I'd known I was to meet him, I'd have reined in my appetite and waited for him."

"A cousin," murmured Mr. Runciman, twisting the cord of the blind in his restless fingers, and staring at Tilly, "come, that's not so bad, nobody wants a cousin."

There was an odd silence when Tilly's gay voice ceased. Mrs. Moxon, thinking of the Canon, shut her eyes as if she would banish Tilly from her remembrance; Honoria's amazement was undisguised; even Mrs. Drew's motherly face wore an abashed and furtive distress; she blushed under her pink ribbons.

"I suppose," said Tilly, looking slowly from one face to the other, "this is one of the things about which you would say 'don't'?"

"Not at all, my dear young lady," the Major struck in with a too ready briskness,

"a very sensible thing to do. There's nothing like an early walk. Here's Sherrington, now"—he turned to that gentleman, who came in with languor—"would do him all the good in the world."

"Thank you," said Sherrington, with his sweet, sad smile; "I prefer the chill taken off the day." He looked at Tilly with a sort of gentle reproach for her bounding vitality. "My theory is, that people should not meet till one o'clock, at the earliest. But what can one do?" he shrugged his shoulders and looked about him with mournful eyes.

"Faith, you wouldn't find much breakfast here at that hour!" cried the Major.

"I wonder what my uncle would say, if I asked him to wait till midday," said Tilly, going off bravely with a smile. Yet she suffered a strange, forlorn sensation as she went upstairs. They had all been against her—everyone; even young Runciman, who had cried out that he would have liked to be with her—by Jove! wouldn't he just?

"The 'don'ts' are swelling," she said to herself; "when I've learned to remember them all, what will there be left to do?"

On the stair she met Mrs. Sherrington, a hurrying figure, with a half-frightened look in her sleepy eyes.

"Why, Miss Burton, you are energetic!" she cried. "You have been out already!"

"Yes," said Tilly, "I've been out. They will tell you all about it downstairs. I've been breaking one of your many commandments; at home we had only ten, but here you have legion."

"Oh!" Mrs. Sherrington stared. "I'm afraid I must go," she said, settling her cuffs and patting her smooth hair. "I'm so late, and my husband won't eat anything, unless I'm there to make him."

Tilly looked after her with genuine pity.

"Uncle Bob," she said as she entered their sitting-room, "I'm glad to think your appetite doesn't suffer in my absence; and you aren't ready to shiver because you see me with my hat on at this forbidden hour, are you?"

"Come along, my lass," said comfortable Uncle Bob; "I just took a bite to pass the time, and now we'll start fair."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

STILL CHAMPION AND DEFENDER OF THE WEAK.

It was long before Adrian Lyle awoke to consciousness, and then he had but a dull and feeble recollection of what had occurred.

He was in his own bed-room in the hotel, and one of the servants told him that a gentleman had found him lying unconscious at the door, and had assisted to carry him in and had gone for a doctor. The doctor had left but a few moments and would return in the course of an hour. Meanwhile, he had left a restoring draught, to be taken as soon as the patient became conscious.

Adrian Lyle listened to the explanation and took the draught, and then sank back on the pillows, trying to collect his thoughts, and wondering at the sense of exhaustion and bodily weakness, which rendered thought and movement alike an exertion.

Happily, the medicine soothed him gradually into a deep and dreamless sleep; a sleep of which he stood sadly in need, to repair the waste of nervous force and vital energy he had of late expended. It was broad day when he woke again, and the sun was streaming into his room.

The same attendant brought him some tea and a message from the gentleman who had come to his assistance on the previous night, to say he would like to see Mr. Lyle for a few moments if he felt strong enough.

"I will dress and see him in the coffee-room," answered the young clergyman. "Do you know the gentleman's name?"

"Yes," was the answer. "He has taken rooms here also. The name is Sir Roy Kenyon."

Adrian Lyle started. The blood flushed to his pale face. He asked no more questions, but dismissed the man; and, dizzy and feeble as he still felt, he made his toilet, and was proceeding downstairs, when a waiter came to him with the request that he would see Sir Roy in his private sitting-room.

Adrian Lyle turned and at once followed the man. A door opened, and closed; he walked steadily forwards, and stood face to face with the old Baronet.

Sir Roy had risen at his entrance, and now bowed coldly and distantly as he pointed to a chair. "I hope," he said, "you are better this morning. It was fortunate I found you. Your condition last night alarmed me."

"I must thank you," answered Adrian Lyle, "for the service you rendered. I have gone through a great deal of trouble and mental anxiety lately. I suppose a collapse was inevitable."

"I was surprised to find you here," continued Sir Roy. "May I ask if we have met in connection with the same business—this unfortunate girl?"

Adrian Lyle looked straight at the calm, unmoved face.

"Sir Roy," he said, "do you know the real facts of the case? Who has been your informant in the first instance?"

"Bari," was the answer.

"Ah," said Adrian Lyle quickly, "I thought as much. Then you have not heard the real facts."

"I have heard," said Sir Roy, "that my

nephew, in the first instance, and you, Mr. Lyle, in the second, are concerned in this deplorable and disgraceful occurrence."

"I!" interrupted Adrian Lyle, the blood flushing dusky to his brow.

"Yes, you. As far as Neale was concerned, the—the affair ended in Rome; but your share in it is far more serious, and has continued up to the present tragedy. I believe——"

"Stop," cried Adrian Lyle imperatively. "I cannot permit such an accusation to stand! Has not your daughter told you the particulars of our interview?"

"You will oblige me," said Sir Roy haughtily, "by keeping Miss Kenyon's name out of this discussion. I am surprised—more than surprised—that your own good taste should not have prevented you speaking to her on the matter as you did."

"I spoke in my own defence," said Adrian Lyle with equal hauteur. "She made an accusation against me on the grounds of certain information given by Bari, who is nothing but a spy and informer. This accusation I indignantly denied. The facts of the case are these. My first acquaintance with your nephew began at Venice, and there he introduced me to this young lady as his wife."

"Come, come," interposed Sir Roy, with an indulgent smile; "I am a man of the world; you, Mr. Lyle, despite your cloth, know well the follies and fancies of youth. Could you suppose for a moment that a young man of my nephew's position and prospects would enter into a serious alliance with a low-born peasant-girl? Ridiculous!"

"A low-born peasant girl!" repeated Adrian Lyle. "Sir Roy, you are indeed labouring under grave error. The girl is a lady in every sense of the word—fair, graceful, well-educated, and of an old Austrian family. They had intended her for a religious life, and, indeed, she was just about to enter a convent when your nephew unfortunately made her acquaintance. She herself told me, that on her family discovering she was in love with an Englishman—of whom, as a race, they had an absolute horror—they resolved that she should enter a convent at once. To escape this fate she fled with your nephew to Vienna, where, she believed, he married her, and took her to Italy. There I met them. He seemed so deeply and passionately in love with her that I for long entertained no suspicion as to the legality of their union; but by degrees I grew uneasy,

and at Rome I had an explanation with him. He was angry and indignant at my interference; but he ended in giving me deliberate assurance that the girl was his wife."

"And, knowing all this," demanded Sir Roy, his face white and stern with anger, "why did you keep the affair a secret from me?"

"He had exacted a promise from me to do so," answered Adrian Lyle. "He said he had certain expectations from you which necessitated his marriage being a secret. I had given my word—I felt angry and grieved that I had done so—but I could see no reason for breaking it, until——"

"Until that letter came?" asked Sir Roy.

"Yes. You must have seen how shocked I was at learning in his own words such an acknowledgement of perfidy and baseness. I could scarcely credit it. I knew where this poor deceived girl lived—I went at once to her. I found Bari again beforehand with me. He had just told her of your nephew's treachery, declaring that the marriage was nothing but a sham, arranged by himself, and that her betrayer now wished to break with her for ever. Sir Roy—if you had seen that poor young broken-hearted creature . . . but what need of words to describe her agony? Look at its sequel—see how the shock and shame have bereft her of reason as of hope; go and see her in her prison cell, a wreck of the youth, and beauty, and sweetness, I remember but a few brief months ago; see her thus, a child in years, her dream-world shattered, her lovely nature wrecked by the wanton cruelty of a weak man's caprice; listen to her broken words, the piteous babbling of that shattered brain; and ask yourself if on all the earth there ever lived a sadder sight. Ask yourself, too, who is the real criminal; who it is that deserves to stand now by her side pilloried by the world's scorn, condemned by all that is just, and honourable, and fair dealing, in the eyes of his fellow-man!"

He had risen from his chair, though one hand still rested on it for support. The compelling force of eyes and voice were on Sir Roy's shrinking face, which had grown white and ghastly with each fresh proof of a guilt he had determined to refute in mere obstinacy and disbelief.

But truth spoke out in every line of this man's face; this man of whom he would have believed a base and shameful lie; this man whose good name had been dragged

through the mire of a cruel scandal for sake of the promise that had sealed his lips; this man who alone had befriended the desolate girl in her misery, and thought it no shame to stand by her now in this most terrible hour of degradation!

As he met that look; as all the faith, and truth, and nobility of Adrian Lyle's most noble nature suddenly spoke and lived before the man who had come here as his accuser; he felt the last hope he had held in his nephew's honour give way. He covered his face with his hands and groaned aloud.

Adrian Lyle watched him silently, almost pityingly. He put the insult to himself aside. It seemed of little consequence what was believed of him, so clear of offence did his own conscience show his actions.

Mistaken, trusting, he might have been, but he had been true to the promise of his friendship; he had come to Gretchen's side in her hour of misery, even as he had said he would; and now he stood, her champion and defender, ready to give her every aid of human love and human pity; ready in face of Heaven and man to proclaim her innocence; ready, ay, at any cost, to take her hand within his own and lead her to safety and to peace, in the face of all who scorned and scoffed at that chivalry of soul, which is but the world's byword for what is too purely noble for its comprehension—ready to do and dare as any knight of old; asking no reward; seeking no favour; but simply for sake of a great and unselfish love, whose only guerdon had been pain and suffering!

The silence was strained almost to intensity. Adrian Lyle could say no more. Sir Roy dared not.

At last, he lifted his head and looked sadly at the brave and noble face before him.

"Mr. Lyle," he said brokenly, "I have down you a great wrong: I—I ask your pardon. My only excuse is my love for the boy. I could not believe him so base. I have looked upon him as a son all my life. The dearest hope of that life has been, that he should one day become the husband of my child; that I should see them happy and honoured in the old home. You can imagine how I fought against this story—refusing to believe Neale capable of such baseness. Bari, who was in his confidence, represented the girl as an adventuress; and swore to me that at Rome she had left my nephew to follow you. I believed him; perhaps, because

I wished to believe him. Again I ask your pardon. He shall confess that he has lied; he shall be forced to refute the base and cruel story now circulating to your discredit, through the length and breadth of the parish—he shall."

"Stay," interposed Adrian Lyle quietly. "I can afford to deal with him in my own way, and at my own time. The reparation and the justice I ask from your hands, Sir Roy, is for this poor victim, whose fate is still in the balance. At all cost, even at risk of the scandal to an honoured name, the true facts of her story must be told. All that money can do for her safety and defence lies in the power of your wealth and influence. May I trust to you? My means are small, though Heaven knows I would give every farthing I have in the world to do her service. But you——"

"Say no more," answered Sir Roy. "I will do all that it is possible to do."

"Then," said Adrian Lyle, "my mind is more at rest. We can but wait the issue of the trial, now. Her fate lies not in our hands, but in that of a Higher Power—may the mercy of Heaven control the justice of man!"

"Amen!" said Sir Roy solemnly, and he extended his hand. Adrian Lyle took it, and held it in a long and silent grasp. There was no need for further words. One man at last believed in him, and would be his friend for life.

CHAPTER II. THE CLOUDS GATHER.

EVERY day Sir Roy Kenyon and Adrian Lyle visited the poor accused creature in her cell; but neither the one nor the other could draw from her any information that might serve for her defence at the approaching trial.

The inquest had proved that the child had been born alive, and was at least three days old at the time it had been discovered; but where the poor young mother had been for those three days, no one could find out.

With untiring patience did Adrian Lyle watch the girl's mental condition, feeling assured that this was only some temporary cloud straining the tortured brain. Gently, tenderly as a woman might have done, but as no woman would have had courage and strength to do, he soothed her and comforted her in the paroxysms of terror which sometimes overtook her, and ever and always sought to lead her mind to that one clue which yet always escaped him.

By it she might be cleared—so said her counsel—without it there was nothing to do but plead temporary insanity.

Anna von Waldstein had not visited the prison again. The shock and horror of that scene had resulted in serious illness, and she had left neither her room nor her bed since.

Sir Roy had telegraphed to Neale to return to England at once on urgent private affairs; but, in the disturbed state of the district where he was stationed, it was scarcely to be expected that he could obtain leave of absence.

Sir Roy had also written to Alexis, informing her of that interview with Adrian Lyle, which had served to convince him of the young clergyman's entire innocence in the matter; and to the Rector, stating the facts of the case, and begging him to consider well before carrying out his threat of referring the matter to the Bishop, since it was clear enough who was the real culprit.

The result of this letter to Mr. Bray was one of apology and regret to Adrian Lyle, and a request that he would think no more of their disagreement, but return to his duties as soon as he found it convenient.

The young man replied with all due courtesy, but maintained that his abrupt dismissal gave him now the right to consider his engagement at an end; and insisted that, though he regretted to seem disobliging, he thought it best not to return to Medehurst.

In the absence of Sir Roy, to whom he always took his grievances and troubles, the old Rector went to Alexis, and confided to her the dreadful mistake he had made, and the difficulty he should find in procuring another curate to suit him so admirably as Adrian Lyle had done. He even gave her his letter to read, knowing nothing of what it cost her to maintain that proud composure; guessing nothing of the conflict she was waging with herself as she remembered the bitter insult she had cast at his feet; feeling herself degraded in his eyes for ever by the memory of that one most hateful interview, when jealousy had dimmed her usual clear sense of justice, and those fierce yet vague emotions of scorn, longing, impotence, and regret, had roused her to a display of anger both humiliating and unwomanly—a display for which atonement and forgetfulness were alike impossible.

She did not answer her father's letter—

she dared not trust herself to do so; and to the Rector she merely handed back Adrian Lyle's cold and courteous epistle, saying: "I thought curates were as plentiful as blackberries, Mr. Bray. Why trouble about the loss of one when you can get fifty others by an advertisement in the 'Rock' or the 'Evangelist' to-morrow!"

In very truth Adrian Lyle scarcely remembered that interview which haunted her so incessantly. His heart was far too troubled; his mind far too occupied for any memory of the proud, cold, and singular being, whose influence on his life had been so short-lived.

The task he had set himself demanded all his strength and all his calmness; he had to fight for Gretchen's honour and for Gretchen's safety; to fight single-handed against obstacles that might well have daunted any man's courage; to fight for an innocence he determined should be proved and to establish which he worked night and day.

The lawyers had told him that one witness might save her, a witness who could prove the birth of the child and the condition of the mother's mind. But to find such a witness without help from Gretchen herself, seemed daily more impossible.

By Sir Roy's influence they got the case remanded for another week, and then it was that a strange and desperate resolve took possession of Adrian Lyle.

He determined to trace step by step Gretchen's course during those three days. Starting from that wood where she had been discovered, he would go backwards on the course she had taken, no matter how difficult it might be.

He told Sir Roy of his project, winning indeed but scant encouragement.

"The police have made every enquiry," said the Baronet. "If such a witness existed, we should have heard of it by this time."

But Adrian Lyle shook his head.

"I have not much faith in the police," he said quietly. "And though I have never in my life played amateur detective, I am determined to do so now. I am convinced that someone could come forward to prove what is now withheld by one of two things."

"And what," asked Sir Roy, "are they?" "Ignorance or malice," was the answer.

The fact of exertion, the impelling force

that hurried him along the road of action, served in a great measure to alleviate the intensity of mental anguish with which Adrian Lyle had become of late so terribly familiar.

Anything, he felt, was better than to contemplate dumbly, helplessly, that changed and sad young life; to listen to the broken words; to gaze at the altered face, with all its sweet and trusting innocence burnt out by the touch of that fatal brand which still flames in the hand of that guardian of the fatal sin—the sin which bears the fruit of knowledge of good and evil.

Away from her, his memory pictured her as she had been, not as she was; though at times the agony of unavailing regret would thrill his soul, as he felt that never word or deed of mortal man would restore her to that lost place, that pedestal of purity and innocence from which her angel face had first looked back to him.

He dared not trust himself to think of it. He forced aside the misery of thought by the restlessness of action. Hour by hour and day by day he pursued the course he had set himself, steadily and relentlessly, keen of eye and strong of nerve, neglecting not the smallest incident that might serve as a link in the chain he was forging. With endurance strung to its highest tension; with patience and resolve waiting on energy and zeal; so he carried on his task, knowing well that his only reward would be the knowledge that he had saved one who would not even know her saviour, or the doom he had averted.

SOME ETYMOLOGICAL CURIOS.

A PAINSTAKING effort to trace the descent of many words and phrases in common use unfolds an interesting field of research; and this, notwithstanding the fact that several works, dealing in a more or less exhaustive manner with the subject, have been published. It would almost seem, however, that the authors of these books have frequently missed their mark by aiming too high; or, in other words, that they have often selected words or sayings which are not by any means common.

Those who have devoted attention to the pedigree of familiar terms will scarcely dispute the above assertion; for the philological antiquary will often in vain consult the dictionaries in question concerning the origin of such expressions, for instance, as

"to cut and run;" "to take him down a peg;" "to set the Thames on fire;" or the like. And he will have but a slightly greater success in the case of numerous words, such as "queer" (which is sufficiently familiar); the term "jerked," as applied to beef; or the name "John Dory," attached to a well-known denizen of the deep. As the whole subject of origin is curious, we may as well begin by an examination of the history of "queer."

De Quincey was a high authority on etymology; he was also, beyond doubt, "queer;" and we have to thank him for placing on record the strange circumstances connected with the birth of that expressive word. These were briefly as follows. Quin, the celebrated actor, while engaged as manager of a theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, one night wagered a nobleman one hundred pounds that, next morning, a new word would be in everybody's mouth. The wager was accepted, it being clearly bargained that the word would be a brand-new one. So, when Mr. Rich's theatre closed that evening, Quin called together all the "supers" and other inferior stage hands. Giving each a large piece of chalk he desired them to go through all the principal streets of London, and write in very legible characters on the "side-walks," the word "queer." On the following morning, of course, people were amazed, and the expression was literally in everyone's mouth. Knots of persons gathered here and there to discuss the matter; and Quin won the wager, leaving us a legacy in the shape of "queer."

Some of the Opium-Eater's etymological discoveries are interesting, if not always trustworthy. He tells us, for example, that the familiar word "news" is simply a combination of the initial letters of the monosyllables North, East, West, South; while he derives the opprobrious term "coward," not from the well-known animal represented in its orthography, but from that animal's caudal appendage—a coward being one who lags behind in battle. A similar kind of reasoning, no doubt, gave rise to the saying: "He is always behind, like the cow's tail," which is common in some districts. Though it may be questioned if the inventor of the "truckle-bed" was conversant with the Greek Lexicon, De Quincey says that that article of furniture derives its designation from "trochlea," a little wheel.

We continually hear of persons "stepping into dead men's shoes," or, rather, it is

remarked that So-and-so has stepped into "a dead man's shoes." Several theories have been advanced to account for the origin of this expression; and an exceedingly plausible one has been set forth by a recent writer. Very much abridged, it is to the following effect:

In Ireland and the Scottish Highlands many "tanist" stones have been found. These are generally portions of the solid rock projecting above the neighbouring surface; and on the tanist stone is carved the impression of a very large human foot. Why the impression is invariably so large, has been a puzzling question to antiquaries; and the writer on tanist stones makes no attempt to explain this important point. But it seems to us to be easily capable of elucidation; at least, if we are to believe the statements of an ancient Celtic author, whose somewhat unspellable name we at present forget. He asserts, however, that the feet of the Picts were so large, that, when the men were slain in battle, they did not fall, but the upper part of their bodies, as it were, "hung," for their feet, owing to their immense proportions, retained their normal position flat on the ground.

This is surprising enough, and we may picture to ourselves the extraordinary aspect of a field "after the battle." But our veracious writer goes further. He adds that, in summer, the Picts utilised the soles of their feet after the manner of the modern umbrella—they lay on their backs, and, elevating their lower limbs, were at once provided with an adequate shelter from the rays of the sun.

When a new King or Chief succeeded to power, he installed himself by placing his right foot in the carved impression, at the same time saying that he was by right installed into his possessions, and would walk in his ancestor's footsteps. Thus he stepped into a dead man's shoes.

While treating of feet we may here note the saying to "put the right foot foremost," which, it is believed, can boast of a Roman origin. Roman etiquette required a visitor, calling on an acquaintance, to step over the threshold with his right foot; and so strictly was this insisted upon, that an attendant was posted at the door to see that the regulation was complied with.

A word which we have just employed, "etiquette," is, of course, directly imported

from beyond the "silver streak." But its present meaning has considerably wandered from its original signification, and has done so by the following interesting path. Etiquette, in the first place, implied a ticket, a label; so, etiquettes were tied to luggage to show its destination; and they were also used to indicate the contents of legal deeds or other documents. In course of time tickets (or etiquettes) were given to people on occasions of state, or to gain for them admission to various entertainments.

From the latter circumstance arose the application of the word to ceremonious behaviour.

The curious word "leet," much used in Scotland, is also derived from the French. According to the old method of an Edinburgh or Glasgow municipal election, a large list of persons was first presented by the trades, so that the magistrates might shorten it. This was the "lang leet;" when abridged, it was called the "short leet." The word is, of course, a corruption of "élite," chosen persons.

Among slang terms, "blunt," meaning money, is from the French "blond," pale-coloured coin.

Some place-names have, however, been set down in too hasty a manner as being direct appropriations from our neighbours. A notable instance of this occurs in the appellations Belgrave, Belgravia, etc., which are often said to have arisen after the great influx of the Huguenots in the seventeenth century. But it appears to be certain that the name of the metropolitan Belgravia is derived from the ancient village of Belgrave, in Cheshire. This place belonged, for hundreds of years, to a family of Belgraves, the ruins of whose castle still exist, though the family has long been extinct.

The same county of Chester gave origin to the saying "to grin like a Cheshire cat," which is still in vogue in many districts of the north of England. Several accounts have been given as to the birth of this suggestive phrase. One, which appears to be the most plausible, asserts that the wild cat continued to inhabit the peninsula between the Dee and Mersey long after it had disappeared from other parts of the country. The face, and especially the mouth, of the animal were very wide, and its "grin" was so exceedingly formidable, that it may easily be imagined how the saying, "to grin like a Cheshire cat" came to be a common one among the peasantry.

It is also said to have arisen from the fact that Cheshire cheeses were, at some distant period, made in the form of the cat indigenous to the county. We are told that the cheeses were embellished with whiskers and tails; and we may suppose that their mouths were accorded a sufficiently wide grin to give the cue to the saying.

"To give the cue" is a common phrase. According to most dictionaries, "cue" (in its theatrical sense) is derived from the Latin "cauda," through the French "queue;" and the same authorities say that it means the last words of a speech which the actor, who has to reply, catches and regards as a notice to begin. This theory is, perhaps, supported by the fact that, in French theatrical phrases, what we call the "cue" is styled the "réplique." But Mr. Wedgewood maintains that the above etymology is quite erroneous. He says that "cue" is derived from "Q," the first letter of the Latin "quando," which used to be marked on the Roman players' parts, to show when they were to enter and speak.

The bibulous customs of our ancestors have bequeathed a number of well-known phrases to our own time. Till a comparatively recent period the Devonshire farmer, accompanied by his labourers, performed the rite briefly described below on the eve of Epiphany. They proceeded to the orchard, and, surrounding the apple trees, drank from a capacious vessel to their budding, bearing, and blowing. The liquor used for this purpose was invariably a concoction of sugar, apples, and ale, being called by the peasants "lambs' wool." This extraordinary appellation might well excite curiosity, and its origin has been explained as follows. The ancient Irish used to worship the spirit that presided over fruit, and particularly over apple trees, the special day devoted to this celebration being called *La Mas Ubhal*—the day of the apple—and the liquor consumed on the occasion received the name of the day. By a series of events, too complicated to detail here, the same designation came to be applied to the liquor of Devonshire, etc., where we have still, in "lambs' wool," a corruption of *La Mas Ubhal*.

The phrases, "he's in a merry pin," and "take him down a peg," we owe to the wisdom of King Edgar, who, according to Strutt, made strenuous efforts to suppress the drinking customs of his

subjects. He would only permit each village to have one ale-house; and placed further restrictions on the inhabitants by the singular method of causing pins or pegs to be affixed at intervals in the drinking cups, which were made of wood or horn. Whoever drank beyond these marks at one draught became liable to a penalty. But the author of "Curiosities of Ale and Beer" says that this ingenious device was of little real use, and eventually led to increased drinking, so much so, that in 1102, Anselm issued the decree: "Let no priests go to drinking bouts, or drink to pegs." Such drinking "to pegs" was commonly called pin-drinking, or pin-nicking, from which latter, perhaps, may come the modern word "picnic."

It is said that Haydn, while he was resident in England, was fond of company, but did not like his guests to remain in his house beyond a certain period. If one of his friends was becoming tiresome, the great composer would suddenly start to his feet, place his hand to his forehead, and remark "I have a tot, I have a tot." This meant that he had a "thought," an idea, and must retire for a moment to note it down. But when he returned to the room, it was frequently observed that he had taken advantage of the opportunity to refresh himself; hence possibly the expression, "a tot of spirits." While treating of spirits, we may glance at the word "gin," which is derived from the Dutch, who call the hollands (their national spirit) "giniva." This term they have drawn from the French "genièvre," juniper; juniper berries being used in flavouring the gin made at Schiedam from unmalted rye.

Passing on from beer and spirits to fish and flesh, we find Prescott, in his "Conquest of Peru," giving the following theory as to the origin of the term "jerked" as applied to beef. Some of the coarser varieties of the Peruvian sheep were slaughtered, their flesh being cut into thin slices. These latter were distributed among the poorer classes of the Incas' subjects, who converted them into "charqui"—the dried meat of the country, which still continues to form an important article of diet in Peru. And so "charqui" is now represented in the "jerked" beef of South America. The name "Peru" itself has given rise to a good deal of controversy. One authority states that

"Pelu" was the Indian name for "river," and was given by a native to one of the Spaniards, who jumped to the conclusion that it was the name of the country; while Montesinos remarks that Peru was the ancient Ophir, which in time became modified into Phiru, Piru, Peru. This is almost as good as the origin of the Scotch surname "Carruthers;" the first of that name being a steersman, who was styled by his shipmates "John Ca' the rudder."

The etymology of "John Dory" has been a vexed question. It appears, however, that this name is a corruption of "il janitore," or the doorkeeper. On the Italian coast, the fish was called St. Peter, and he being supposed to be the doorkeeper of heaven, "il janitore" was occasionally substituted; this, British tars transformed into John Dory. Among vegetables, the "Jerusalem" artichoke is a corruption of "girasole"—the plant turning to the sun—and many may have wondered what connection it has with Jerusalem. The "mayduke" cherry, again, derives its name from Medoc in Burgundy; while the damson is "dama-scene," or the plum of Damascus. The "bigaroon" cherry is so called from Bigorre, the French province where it is grown; and "cherry" itself is from Cerasus, in Asia Minor. Among celebrated apples, the "rennet" is "la reinette," or the "little queen"; while "pippin" is derived, says Dr. Johnson, from the Dutch "puppynghe." The brown "bury" pear is so named from its buttery or melting quality ("beurré"); and the "arline" plum is a corruption of "Orleans."

The word plum reminds us of the slang term "plum," meaning one hundred thousand pounds. Professor Barrere traces this to "pluma," a feather, the idea being that the man who had accumulated so large a sum had thoroughly "feathered his nest." This is as good as Dr. Mackay's etymology of "bobby," a policeman. Bobby, he says, is derived from a Gaelic word, "bobhan," meaning "a big boy." But Professor Barrere confesses himself beat by other financial terms, such as "pony," "monkey," and "marygold." The name "tanner," however, which is attached to a well-known coin, is derived from the Gipsy language. It is remarkable to observe that numerous words, once regarded as slang, have now been regularly incorporated with the English tongue. "Saunterer" is an instance of this. The beggars who, in mediæval times, wandered about the country, pretending that they were poor

Crusaders from the "sainte terre," became before long known as "sainte terrors," hence our word "saunterer."

We may perhaps hazard the guess that the phrase that such a person, or such an undertaking, is "up a tree," is derived from the unpleasant experiences of Charles the Second, after the battle of Worcester; while we may in passing attempt to deprive our American cousins of the honour of coining the term "Lynch Law." It appears to be generally believed that this expression is of Yankee origin. But a recent traveller in the west of Ireland visited Galway, where he was shown one of the principal "sights" of the town—an ancient house, with a window over which Governor Lynch hanged his own son. This event probably took place long before "Lynch Law" was heard of in the far West. Many words and phrases in common use are, however, importations from the United States. "Yankee" itself was originally the word "English," as pronounced by the Indians (Yenghies, Yanghies, Yankees). "Bogus," again, is from "Borghese," a swindler who passed many counterfeit bills in America, while "The Upper Ten," or "The Upper Ten Thousand," seems to have come from the same country. Mr. N. P. Willis, in one of his letters as Special Correspondent to a Philadelphia newspaper, said: "The seats for the first night are already many of them engaged, and engaged, too, by the very cream of our upper ten." "Upper Crust" is another example. Judge Haliburton, as Sam Slick in England, writes: "I want you to see Peel, Stanley, Macaulay, etc. They are all upper crust here."

Many of us have been told by pedagogues or others that the word "Cabal," was formed from the initials of the names of Charles the Second's ministers—names needless to detail here. This, however, is undoubtedly a mistake; for we find the word used in the time of Queen Elizabeth by Sir John Harrington. It occurs in the epigram:

I am no cabalist, to judge by number;
Yet this church is so with pilleeers filled,
It seems to me to be the lesser wonder,
That Sarum's church is every house pilled.

"Hudibras" was written ten years before the celebrated "Cabal" of 1672, yet we find the word employed by Butler in two different senses. In Part One it occurs as follows:

For mystic learning with wondrous able
In magic talisman and cabal.

And in Part Four, in its usual acceptation :

Set up committees of cabals,
To pack designs without the walls.

Some etymologists derive "cabal" from a Hebrew word, meaning a hidden science of Divine mysteries, which the Rabbis affirmed was revealed to Moses, and by him handed down to posterity. The sceptical Gentiles, however, treated this assumption of the Jewish priests as a mere pretence, so in time "cabal" came to have a less reverential significance. But whatever the remote derivation of the word may be, it is clear that it was in use before the reign of Charles the Second.

Some years ago, the expression, "What will Mrs. Grundy say?" was constantly in people's mouths. The phrase was originally taken from Tom Morton's comedy, "Speed the Plough." The play opens with a view of a farm-house, where Farmer Ashfield is seen sitting at a table, enjoying his ale, and holding the following colloquy with his wife :

"ASHFIELD. Well, dame, welcome home. What news does thee bring from market ?

"DAME. What news ? What I always told you—that Farmer Grundy's wheat brought five shillings a quarter more than ours did.

"ASHFIELD. All the better for he.

"DAME. And I assure you, Dame Grundy's butter was quite the crack of the market.

"ASHFIELD. Be quiet, will ye. Always ding-dinging Dame Grundy into my ears. 'What will Mrs. Grundy say ?'

Professor Barrere asserts that a saying of a different kind, "gone to my uncle's," is really a pun upon the Latin "uncus," the hook which pawnbrokers employed to lift articles before the more modern spout was invented. The latter, again, has given rise to another slang phrase, more politely expressed by the American speculator when he explained to the Bankruptcy Court, that his property had gone "where the woodbine groweth."

The meaning of the term "sub rosa," "under the rose," is, "in strict confidence." Cupid gave Harpocrates (the god of silence) a rose, to bribe him not to betray the amours of Venus. The rose thus became the emblem of silence. It was sculptured on the ceilings of banquet-rooms, to remind the guests that what was said there was not to be repeated outside ; and down to 1526, a rose was placed over confessionals.

The dictum that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," has been ascribed to John Wesley ; but it is said to have originated from the following sentence by George Herbert :—"His [a clergyman's] apparel is plain but reverend, and clean, without spots or dust ; the purity of his mind breaking out and dilating itself, even to his body, clothes, and habitation."

Philologists seem to be almost unanimous in considering the familiar term "navvy," to be a corruption of the word "navigator" for, the first canals being known as "navigations," their contractors were called "navigators," soon contracted to "navvies." About a quarter of a century ago, however, a clergyman resident at Fort William advanced the following ingenious theory as to the derivation of "navvy."

In the northern countries of the Scottish Highlands, the Danish word "nabi" is used in the sense of "neighbour," and has so been employed for centuries. When the Caledonian Canal was being cut in 1800 and the following twenty years, many of the inhabitants of the surrounding districts were, as a matter of course, engaged in the work. These men frequently addressed one another as "nabi"—just as an Englishman would probably say "mate," "chum," or "comrade." A large number of the same men afterwards proceeded to assist in the excavation of the Crinan Canal, which intersects the Mull of Cantyre, and where they found among the workmen a very considerable admixture of Englishmen. Here the use of the term "nabi" or "naabi," became all but universal ; and as the contractors and superintendents were English, they conveyed the word with them to the southern canals, when it was soon corrupted into "navvy." This theory, if not quite tenable, has at least the merit of ingenuity ; and it appears to be certain, at any rate, that the labourers at the Crinan Canal were called "naabis."

About the period when canals were being made all over the country, a vast number of Martello towers rose along the southern shores of England and Ireland. An invasion was expected, and it was generally imagined that this descent would take place on the Irish coast. Lord Cornwallis was Viceroy, and he ordered a series of isolated fortifications to be built. But much discussion followed as to the design to be adopted in the construction of these forts ; there was

little prospect of their being erected in too great a hurry. It happened, however, that the Duke of Richmond returned from the Mediterranean, while the authorities were considering a variety of plans. He had witnessed the bombardment of a little town, called Martella, on the Corsican coast. Most of the defences of this place were quickly laid in ruins by the heavy guns of the English fleet; but one insignificant-looking fort offered an unexpected opposition. On this building, which was of a circular form, the heaviest artillery of the times made no impression whatever. The cannon balls glanced off the structure, just as they are said to have done when fired in more recent days at the circular turret of the celebrated "Monitor," during the American Civil War. So this small Corsican fort was the progenitor of the multitude of "Martello" towers, which still mount guard on the shores of the English Channel. The turret-ship "Monitor," above alluded to, was likewise the progenitor of hosts of vessels of similar build, called "Monitors."

Among exclamations in common use, "Halloo!" and "Hurrah!" have curious origins attributed to them. It is said by the author of the "Queen's English," that the people of Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire, when they desire to hail a person at a distance, call out, not "halloo!" but "halloup!" This he imagines is a survival of the times when one cried to another, "a loup! a loup!" or as we would now say, "wolf! wolf!" "Hurrah," again, according to M. Littré, is derived from the Slavonic huraj, "to Paradise," which signified that all soldiers who fell fighting valiantly, went straight to heaven. "Prithes" is obviously a corruption of "I pray thee"; while "marry" was originally, in Popish times, a method of swearing by the Virgin Mary.

The familiar term "jockey" is from the Gipsy "chuckni," a whip; and John Galt informs us that "canter" is an abbreviation of "Canterbury." In his "Entail," this passage occurs:—"The horse at the same moment, started forward into that pleasant speed at which the pilgrims of yore were wont to pass from London to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, which for brevity, is in vulgar parlance called, in consequence, a canter." In the south of Scotland, a donkey is termed a "cuddy";

and near Melrose Abbey, there is a park called "Cuddy's Green." This, however, is a contraction of Saint Cuthbert's Green.

Sir Walter Scott, when embarking on a new steamship called the "City of Edinburgh," remarked to the captain that the vessel should have been christened the "New Reekie"; and he is responsible for the subjoined explanation of the sobriquet "Auld Reekie," as applied to the northern capital. A Fifeshire laird used to regulate the time of evening worship by the appearance of the smoke of Edinburgh, which could be distinctly seen from the door of his mansion. When he observed the smoke thickening, he directed his family to make preparations for prayer. "For yonder's Auld Reekie," said he, "putting on her night-cap!" These is met with, in some districts, a surname "Reekie"; perhaps this may be derived from the by-name of the Scotch capital.

To turn for a moment to one or two terms of a different character, we find that "turncoat" has an interesting history. One of the Dukes of Savoy found his position between the opposing forces of France and Spain somewhat awkward; and he had often to change sides. In order to facilitate this alternation of policy he had a coat made, blue on one surface and white on the other, either side being adapted to wear outwards. When in the French interest, he appeared in white; when in the Spanish, in blue. From these circumstances he acquired the nickname of Emanuel the Turncoat, to distinguish him from the other Princes of his house.

"Cravats," now obsolete, or nearly so, were introduced to Paris by the Croats; while "haberdashers" derive their designation from a variety of cravat which enjoyed great popularity, and which was called a "berdash."

"Blue-stocking" has given rise to much controversy. De Quincey attributes the use of the word to an old Oxford statute, which instructs "loyal scholastic students" to appear in blue socks; while Dr. Bisset says "blue-stocking" was a sobriquet applied to the only gentleman who attended Lady Mary Montague's assemblies in Portman Square. This gentleman, a learned Dr. Stillingfleet, wore blue stockings.

It is singular to note that the well-known word "Whig" is derived, by

Jamieson, from "whig," "an acetous liquor subsiding from sour cream."

"Tory," again, comes from the Irish, "tora, tora," "stand and deliver;" and was in the first instance applied to bands of outlaws, who harassed and cut off the English in Ireland. Then it came to be used with reference to supposed abettors of the celebrated "treason and plot;" and at a later time a "Tory" was one who refused to concur in the exclusion of a Roman Catholic Prince from the throne.

From the far East we get the saying, "white elephant." The Oriental monarchs were wont to bestow a white elephant on subjects whom they designed to hurry to ruin. To house, feed, and attend on the royal animal would cost the unhappy recipient of it more than all the care and treasure he had it in his power to give, so that at length he was ruined by the very magnificence of the present.

From nearer home we have the well-known expression: "He will never set the Thames on fire." It is thus explained. Our ancestors used a wooden mill, or quern, which sometimes took fire when worked with great rapidity. This mill was called the *Thammis*; and when in the hands of an idle miller, the chances of its becoming ignited were considerably minimised.

But it is time for us to conclude; and we may appropriately do so by glancing at the common phrase, "to cut and run." In ancient Egypt, anyone who ventured to mutilate the dead was held in abomination. But the system of embalming rendered certain "operations" necessary; and a low-caste person was selected to make the first incision. As soon as he had completed his task he was set upon by the bystanders, who belaboured him with sticks, and thus, followed by stones and curses, he found it highly expedient, having "cut," to "run." At least, that is one explanation of the saying, and perhaps it is as good as another.

THE OLD CASKET.

THE key is lost? Well, we must force the lock:

It is but a slight thing of filigree.

See, we can press it back, nor ever shock

The silver rosebuds, twisted cunningly

Over the casket's face, from the quaint shape

They took, how many centuries ago?

The age they deemed it beauty's art to ape

The blossoms as you never see them grow.

What subtle perfume rises as the lid

Yields to your fingers? 'Tis the self-same scent,

As that among the rich brocade was hid,

That Christmas when the hoarded robes were
lent

To the gay masquers; 'tis some rare perfume
She prized perchance, our fairest ancestress,
Who hangs there, guardian of the Doric room;
Where are the pearls she bears upon her dress?

Not in the casket here! They went, I think,
With the oak avenue whose roots we trace
There in the park—one prizes each frail link,
Between the storied past and the old place,
Which, though its trees and jewels both are gone
For King and Crown, you children hold so dear.
Well, lift the casket treasures one by one,
And guess what chance has kept them hoarded
here.

A miniature, what glorious eyes he had!
And see, the scallop and the shell are there!
Did the hot Eastern desert keep the lad,
With his proud mouth and waves of golden hair?
A faded rosebud, ah! it crumbles fast;
An azure sword-knot, see the crimson stain—
What could it tell us of the stormy past,
And its wild story of love, loss, and pain!

A rich brown curl—like to live things its hairs
Twine round your fingers—severed once, per-
chance,
From a dead head, at a dead lip's fond prayers,
Given with blushing smile and passionate glance.
So gather up the crumbling roses' dust,
And with the tress lay them amid the fold
Of this frail letter, breathing hope and trust
In the chivalric form and phrase of old.

The yellowing pages scarcely may endure
A touch ungentle—very tenderly
Put the soft curl, still fresh, and bright, and pure,
Amid the withered pledge of love to lie.
That is all, is it not? Too curious
Has been our idle search and trifling
Over the relics, nothing worth to us—
To some one each was once a precious thing.

How do we know? The spirits passed away
Who owned them once, may hover near us now.
To hear us, creatures of a later day,
Half-jesting, guess at love, and troth, and vow.
Hush! was it wind that down the corridor
Sent that long sigh? What echo from afar
Rang like a footstep on the oaken floor?
I wish we had not forced the casket bar!

CHRONICLES OF THE WELSH COUNTIES.

CARDIGAN, PEMBROKE, CARMARTHEN.

IN Cardiganshire we have one of the old Welsh Principalities. It is Ceredigion, said to have derived its name from Caredig, son of Cunedda, who, in the middle of the fifth century, expelled the Gaels who had established themselves on the coast, and became the ruler of the land he had recovered. It is a county with a distinct character of its own, wild and desolate over the greater part of its surface, and yet with charming glens and ravines here and there, sunk beneath the general level of the desert plateau. Its streams and rivers are numerous, and nearly all rise within its own boundaries; excellent fishing streams for the most part where not fouled by mine works. Such is the River Teifi with Cardigan town—or as the Welsh

call it, Aberteifi—at its mouth, a river
justly celebrated by Michel Drayton—

Sith I must stem thy stream, clear Teivy, yet be-
fore

The Muse vouchsafe to seize the Cardiganian shore,
She of thy source will sing in all the Cambrian
coast;

Which of thy castors once, but now can'st only
boast

Thy salmon, of all floods most plentiful in thee.

That the beaver really haunted the River Teifi within historic times there is satisfactory evidence to show, and the valley perhaps owes some of its rich meadow flats to the dams constructed by these industrious creatures centuries ago. Giraldus, writing in the reign of Henry the Second, describes the animal as still existing in the river. Indeed the beaver was also known in North Wales, and under its Welsh name, Ffrangcon, has left a memory here and there, in vale or stream.

Though the beaver is extinct, the salmon still remains, and the Teifi fishery continues one of the best in Wales. In the northern parts of the county the rivers are much befouled by the mine works. But this is no new thing, for mining in Cardiganshire is an ancient industry which existed probably from the time of the Roman dominion in Britain. Otherwise it is difficult to see what was the object of the Roman roads that traversed the county across the wild hills, not only roads of grand communication, but less pretentious vicinal ways, still often in use between parish and parish. The metal seekers were here, no doubt, time out of mind; nor could their privileges be deemed onerous, nor their customs too exacting, considering the benefits they conferred on the community at large. The early Norman Kings, with a foresight that did them credit, laid claim to all mines discovered throughout the country—that is, they claimed the royalty paid by the miner—while at the same time they gave the royal sanction to his privilege of freely prospecting for metal in any man's domain.

Of mines of gold and silver, indeed, the King claimed the whole produce, and as lead ore contains a greater or less percentage of silver, the Crown laid claim to the lead mines too. During the minority of King Henry the Sixth, the Duke of Bedford granted himself a lease of all gold and silver mines within the kingdom, with the title of Governor of the Royal Mines. The distracted state of the Kingdom, however, culminating in the Wars of the Roses, caused the Royal claims to

fall into abeyance, and in the wilds of Cardiganshire mining went on, without much tribute being rendered to the Caesar of the day.

Queen Elizabeth leased all her Royal rights to a company of mining adventurers, and under license from this company the well-known Hugh Myddleton realised a large fortune, by successfully mining for silver in Cardiganshire. This fortune, it is said, was in a great measure expended by Sir Hugh, in bringing the New River water to London; but the enterprising Welshman went on mining to the end of his life, and no doubt with tolerable success. At any rate his successor, Thomas Bushel, drew a large fortune from the same mines, and obtained the Royal permission to establish a mint in the Castle of Aberystwith, where from 1638 to 1642 silver pieces were coined, which are still tolerably plentiful in the cabinets of collectors. So great, indeed, was the value of the bullion raised, that Bushel obtained a grant of the Isle of Lundy as a storehouse for his treasure; and when the Civil War broke out, Bushel was able to show his gratitude to the King by clothing the whole of the Royal army in the West, as well as by lending the King the sum of forty thousand pounds in specie. Eventually Bushel sank nearly the whole of his fortune in supporting the Royal cause; and the most productive veins of ore being now exhausted, Bushel abandoned his Cardiganshire mines and went prospecting on the Mendip Hills, led to this course, it is said, by some old prophecy of the enchanter, Merlin.

Some years later valuable veins of ore were discovered at Gogerddan, near Aberystwith, on the estate of Sir Carberry Price, and in the year 1690 an Act of Parliament was obtained in the interests of landed proprietors, by which the ancient claims of the Crown were abrogated, and only a royalty retained upon the produce of gold mines. On the Act receiving the Royal assent Sir Carberry Price rode straight from Whitehall to his home in Cardiganshire, accomplishing the journey within forty-eight hours, and bonfires were lighted on all the hills, and general rejoicings instituted, in celebration of the event.

To Dovey's floods shall numerous traders come,
Employ'd to fetch the British bullion home,

writes one of the minor poets of the period. With many vicissitudes of fortune silver mining went on, enriching a few proprietors, bringing many adventurers to

ruin, and affording precarious employment to colonies of working miners. In the result the less valuable product has proved the more profitable.

Meagre lead
Which rather threat'nest than doth promise aught.

The chief lead-mining district is among the hills and ravines where the streams join the Rivers Rheiddol and Ystwith, above the watering-place of Aberystwith, and in the wild dreary country whose monotonous desolation is relieved by that wondrous chasm which is spanned by the Devil's Bridge. The name is uncomplimentary to the monks of the Abbey of Strata Florida, who built the original arch, the lower one, now disused, high above which stretches the handsome span of the more modern bridge. The Welsh, however, with more propriety, call the bridge Pontarmynach, or Monks' Bridge.

In the same wild district, but on the watershed of the Teifi, is placed the Abbey of Strata Florida, once the richest and most famous Abbey in Wales—now represented only by a few fragments, and a fine Norman arch, which has been marvellously preserved in the midst of universal ruin. When Leland visited the place in the reign of Elizabeth, he found that the precincts of the Abbey were still a favourite place of burial, and the ruins were surrounded by a cemetery of great extent, with thirty-nine great yew trees growing there. The Reformation, which destroyed this noble foundation, was never a popular movement in Wales, but was regarded with little but indifference.

The Welsh, indeed, had always viewed with dislike the supremacy of the see of Canterbury; the see of St. David's was, in their eyes, the rightful Metropolitan of the Church of Wales, and English domination had weakened so much the hold of the Church on the people of Wales, that its misfortunes hardly touched their sympathies. Among the farmers and peasants, the old prayers, the old charms, still retained a certain influence; they assembled at the parish church on Sundays as for a weekly holiday. The parson shared the potations and amusements of his flock; if a sense of decorum prevented his playing ball in the churchyard with the rest, anyhow he might keep the score. It is customary to regard this period as one of Egyptian darkness; but there was, probably, a great deal of honest enjoyment and happiness; and, if the men drank a good deal of ale, at least the ale was good.

Then came the religious revival, beginning in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when preaching was revived with something like bardic fervour, and the heart of the people was moved and excited, and everywhere chapels arose through the land.

Not far from the Abbey, near the village of Tregaron, is still shown the house of the Robin Hood of Wales, the Robin Hood, Dick Turpin, and Jack Sheppard of the popular legend rolled into one. Tom Jones, or, in Welsh, Tom Sion Catti, no doubt had a real existence, and flourished at his neighbours' expense between the years 1590 and 1630, but legend has embellished the small fragments of his veritable history with many ornaments of ancient folk-lore. That Tom, while living ostensibly on his small patrimony, should have added to his means by plundering all the country round about is credible enough. He certainly did not rob the rich to help the poor, after the example of Robin Hood; on the contrary, he plundered the small people and left alone the great, and thus was able to evade justice, and to finish his career with credit by marrying an heiress and eventually becoming High Sheriff of the county.

Through this same lonely region runs the old Roman Way known as Sarn Helen, which traverses the county from end to end; and at Llanio, a small township of Tregaron parish, remains of an extensive Roman settlement have been discovered. But among the peasantry of the county the Roman roads and camps are generally ascribed to the Flemings, the authors of all the mischief done in that part of the country, according to popular tradition.

This notion in regard to the Flemings, so opposed to that generally conceived of a mild, industrious people, occupied in teaching the semi-barbarous English and Welsh all kinds of useful arts and industries, requires a little elucidation. In the time of our Henry the First, Robert of Jerusalem, who had served with Geoffry of Bouillon at the siege and capture of the Holy City, was Count of Flanders, and a firm ally and a pensioner of our King. "In his time, Flanders was so afflicted with plague, famine, inundations, and continued rains, from October, 1108, to April, 1109, that many of the inhabitants were forced to retire into England, where they were planted in a colony in the east part of the country by King Henry." The east part of the country resented very strongly

the intrusion of these foreigners, and eventually the colony was planted in that extreme corner of Wales, now known as Pembrokeshire.

The ancient Principality of Dyfed, the Demetia of the Romans, at one time had embraced the greater part of South Wales. The tribe of Pendaran Dyfed was, according to tradition, one of the three original tribes of the Cymry. It spoke its own peculiar dialect of the Welsh, and in earlier times, it spread over the opposite shores of the Severn, occupying the counties of Devon and Cornwall, and holding out a friendly hand to the kindred tribe of the land now called Brittany. But in the twelfth century, Dyfed had shrunk into the corner called Pembroke. At the present time, Pembroke is still divided between an English and a Welsh speaking people. Here is the little England beyond Wales, which has existed as a distinct colony for at least seven centuries, and probably for much longer. For it is highly improbable that the broad tidal lakes and fiords, known as Milford Haven, were overlooked by the colonising or plundering swarms from the Baltic. The names of places of rivers and creeks, all suggest the Northman; and when Arnulph de Montgomery founded the town of Pembroke, and built a strong castle there, he levied tribute probably not from Welshmen, but from settlements of his own more or less distant kinsmen.

The south part of Pembrokeshire, indeed, is apart from the rest of Wales in physical character, as in population. It is a land of market gardens and fruit plantations, a land that yields much to careful cultivation, and in whose neatness and primness the Flemings have left perhaps their trace. Otherwise, there is little definite to remind us of this foreign plantation, unless it be a solidity and sturdy grace in the brickwork of ancient buildings and farmhouses. We hear of the Flemings indeed in the early Welsh chronicles; they are marching to and fro; they are fighting with Rhys and Caradoc; they are somehow mixed up in the curious imbroglio of Princes, Concubines, Bishops, and Royal Stewards, that were the moving pieces of the politics of the time. But of the inner life of the colony, we know nothing. Probably, it was never a very large one; a military rather than an industrial settlement, which soon became merged among the English-speaking inhabitants of the district.

The northern part of Pembrokeshire remained still thoroughly Welsh. There

stood the ancient shrine of Saint David, who had removed the Metropolitan jurisdiction of the Church of Wales from Caerleon upon Usk—that once famous city of the Roman rule—to the barren promontory looking over the Irish Sea. Here, too, something like a city had arisen: a place that was almost neutral ground, in virtue of the holiness of its surroundings, and owed its prosperity to the pilgrims that resorted there from all parts of Wales, and even from the English borders.

Pembroke is a county of noble harbours without ships; and, as if Milford Haven which would hold the whole commercial marine of the whole world, were not enough, here is Fishguard on the north coast, with a noble bay, in which an Armada might find secure anchorage. Such an Armada did anchor in Fishguard Bay in the year 1797; if not a mighty fleet, yet sufficient to put the coast and all the neighbouring regions in a state of great alarm.

Three French ships, one of which was an armed frigate, anchored in the bay and landed a force of fourteen hundred men. Their General formed an entrenched camp on a neighbouring height, which had been used for the same purpose some ages before. It was ages, indeed, since anything exciting had occurred in that neighbourhood; perhaps not since the Flemings appeared in sight, or the mail-clad men-at-arms of Arnulph de Montgomery.

The men of St. David's, however, were equal to the occasion. On the news that the enemy had landed, they mustered and demanded the keys of the cathedral, and, when their purpose was questioned, they pointed significantly to the roof, some part of which was covered with lead. The lead was stripped from the roof and divided among six blacksmiths, to be melted into bullets. Fowling-pieces were furnished up, and every man who was capable of bearing arms was warned for the levy en masse. All this seems to have been done, as it were, instinctively, by the people themselves, without leaders, without organisation.

It seems probable that the French Directory, in thus throwing an isolated expedition upon the coast, had the notion that the Welsh, like the Irish, were ripe for rebellion, for the force in itself was curiously unfit for any aggressive purpose. It was the Légion Noire, of fourteen

hundred men, under Colonel Tate—with the local rank of General—eight hundred of whom were convicts, recently liberated from the galleys; while the others had been drafted on account of bad conduct from different regiments.

As soon as the enemy had landed, they mostly dispersed in search of plunder. There had been a wreck on the coast not long before. Some ship from Lisbon or Oporto had been driven out of her course and lost, and all the cottages and farm-houses had their stores of port wine, upon which the convicts regaled themselves, blessing their lucky stars. They surrendered their arms with delight. "Bon, monsieur; bon! bon!" was the general expression as each man was relieved of musket, bayonet, and belt. Some, however, of the plunderers returned to the camp.

A wealthy farmer of the neighbourhood, stumbling incautiously upon their lines, was taken prisoner, and, while being conveyed to the General's tent, was neatly stripped of watch, chain, silver knee-buckles; even of his money, which he had hidden in his shoes. The officers were indignant, and would have made their men disgorge their plunder, but would have been shot by their soldiers had they persisted; and they set their prisoner at liberty with many apologies.

Meantime, the French ships had sailed away, leaving the legion to its fate. The frigate was captured before she reached Brest, and afterwards served in the Royal Navy as the "Fishguard," a name given the ship in commemoration of the scene of such great events.

A hastily-summoned force of militia and volunteers now appeared upon the scene, under the Thane of Cawdor, a Campbell, it will be remembered, who had property in the neighbourhood. The Welsh women thronged the heights all round, and with their scarlet cloaks and tall steeple hats, are said to have been counted as so many soldiers by the enemy. The same story, by the way, is told about the Spanish Armada, where the dames of Cornwall figure in a similar way; but such coincidences are not uncommon. Anyhow the French General, not trusting his own troops, determined on surrender, and after their brief spell of liberty the convicts were able to compare notes as to the conveniences of their native galleys and an English military prison, not always, probably, to the advantage of the latter.

Haverfordwest, the finest town in South Wales, was, no doubt, an English settlement originally under the De Claires, fragments of whose castle are built into the county gaol. Then there is Milford, on the shores of its haven, with a chequered modern history of alternate decay and prosperity; and on another creek of the great estuary are to be found the ruins of Carew Castle, one of the finest baronial castles in Wales. This brings us to Tenby, which is full of interest as to its environs; and that all adventurous interest about the surrounding coasts is not lost, may be gathered from the perusal of a recently-published work, full of gossip as to the district under review, called a "History of Pendine."

As for Carmarthenshire, its most notable feature is the rich and noble vale of Towy, the garden of South Wales, fitly celebrated by its own poet, Dyer.

Bard of the fleece whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape fair and bright,
Nor hallowed less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood
strayed.

For surely in Dyer we have the continuer of that sweet music of English verse, of which Spenser and Shakespeare had the secret; which Milton learnt from them; and of which Dyer alone of all the poets of the eighteenth century, preserved the tradition. And to quote Wordsworth again:

A grateful few shall love thy modest lay;
Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aerial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill.

Grongar Hill is in fact the ancient park of the once renowned Castle of Dynevor, the "Great Castle," according to the meaning of the name in Welsh, the seat of the great Roderick, King of all the Cymry, and afterwards of the Princes of South Wales. Here Spenser, in his "Faerie Queene," places the retreat of the enchanter, Merlin:

Under a rock that has a little space
From the swift Tyvi, tumbling down space
Amongst the woody hills of Dynevor.

In the same valley, too, are the ruins of Drysllyn Castle, the history of which is thus epitomised by Roscoe in his "Wanderings through South Wales."

"Drysllyn Castle once occupied a large space of ground, but its remains are very inconsiderable, comprising only some fragments of the walls and a part of one of the towers. It was erected by one of the Princes of the house of Dynevor, and was

amongst the last of the possessions which they were permitted to retain. It has heard the song of minstrelsy within its ancient walls, and beleaguering hosts have set themselves down before its gates in deadly array. Near the spot where I stood, its massy walls had given way from the operations of a secret mine, and buried in its fall the besieging generals, Stafford and Mountchency, with many of their officers. 'Sic transit gloria mundi,' I ejaculated, as I turned my saddened steps away to pursue my solitary wanderings."

But the whole aspect of this charming valley is realised in the description of John Dyer, in his poem of Grongar Hill:

Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landscape tire the view?
The fountains fall, the rivers flow;
The woody valleys, warm and low;
The windy summits wild and high
Roughly rushing on the sky.
The pleasant seat, the ruined tower,
The naked rock, the shady bower;
The town and village, dome and farm,
Each give each a double charm,
As pearls upon an Æthiop's arm.

Following the course of the river we soon come

To Maridunum, that is now by change
Of name Cayr Marddin call'd.

Carmarthen, although a town of importance in the days of the Roman Empire, and afterwards the chief town of South Wales, and the seat of its Chancery and Exchequer, even to modern times, has now only the aspect of a cheerful, thriving modern town.

As for points of interest in the modern history of the county of Carmarthen, these would be comprised in the records of the curious rising on the part of the agricultural population of the county in the early part of the present century known as the "Rebecca Riots."

Well provided with excellent roads in Roman times, in modern days the highways of South Wales had fallen into a terrible state, while, thickly planted over the whole network, innumerable toll-gates exacted heavy and preposterous tolls from every vehicle. The grievance was a real one, especially for the small farmers, whose produce was thus unfairly handicapped; but there was no one to redress it, nor anybody responsible who could be reached or affected by protest or remonstrance.

The inhabitants of the district took the matter into their own hands. They met under the leadership of Rebecca, a man disguised in woman's clothes, whose identity was never discovered, although many

must have been in the secret. Everywhere toll-bars were levelled and toll-houses destroyed. Police and military were employed in vain; Rebecca was ubiquitous, but always timed her appearance when her pursuers were toiling after her in the far distance.

At last the riots were suppressed; but only when their object had been attained. The obnoxious toll-bars nobody ventured to reinstate.

The strange part of the matter was the unanimity of the people in resisting the law, and the conviction of the justice of their cause. Even now, it would not be prudent to say any very hard things against Rebecca in the county which was the chief scene of her exploits.

RICH AND FREE!

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

WHATEVER may have been my indefinitely horrible apprehensions, they were, of course, none of them realised.

The large, bare-looking room was nearly empty; fresh and hushed.

The time must, I think, have been early morning. A cold, clear light from a large window fell full upon him where he lay. I do not know what I had expected. Perhaps that he would greet me with curses—and surely they would not have been undeserved. But he looked calm and placid as he stretched his hand out to me, even before I was near enough to take it.

"Thank you for coming," were his first words. "I know you shrink from this kind of thing and place. But I could not help wanting to see you once more. Could not help wanting to know what had happened to you. Where were you? Not that anything will make much difference now."

When I did not speak, there was a strange intensity in the gaze he fixed on me. "We little thought," he presently began again, "that this is how it would end—the experiment we were going to try. Well! perhaps it is best. Heaven knows. I am thankful we meet once more. I have a good deal to say to you—if I should be able to say it."

He appeared to me to be altogether changed—the grossness gone from his face, the coarseness from his voice. He spoke slowly, and with frequent pauses, all the while keeping hold of my hand.

I knelt down beside his bed, because I was not able to stand. He was silent for a little and closed his eyes. When he opened them again they had a startled look in them.

"It was horribly sudden. I knew instantly what it meant. I remember thinking 'glad she is not in it!' But where were you? You haven't told me. I suppose you know that I am dying. I want the truth. How did I miss you? Were you in the first train after all? Had you walked into the town and—lost your way and got too late?"

I did not think I could open my lips to answer him. It seemed to me that if I spoke at all, the brutal truth would break from me. He was still holding me. Had his grasp been still a strong grasp, I should have wrenched my hands free, and left him. As it was, his weakness held me there. But I looked round, despairingly, for help of some sort. The nurse, who was hovering near, on the watch as to how he bore the agitation, brought me a chair and lifted me into it.

When she had again left us, he spoke again, pleadingly. "Won't you speak to me? Won't you tell me? There isn't any time to lose. When the pain racks me, I don't know or understand anything. They must take you away then. I don't know what I might say then. Mind you are taken away then."

His brows and eyes contracted; his face took a piteous expression of anxiety and dread.

I stooped my mouth close to his ear and said: "I ran away. I did not mean that we should ever meet again."

I felt a nervous spasm in the hand that held mine; but he said nothing—lay quite quiet with his eyes now fixed upon the window. The sun had just come round there, and the nurse had pulled down a white blind. On this blind were the sharp shadows of dancing leaves, and the shadow of some tiny bird fluttering from twig to twig of the creeper. He seemed absorbed in watching these things, and my eyes followed the direction of his. These suggestions of stir and life outside seemed to accentuate the stillness of the room.

The nurse glided up to the bed. "That is right," she said, seeing his quiet look. "Your coming has done him good. He won't be so restless now. Very soon he must take his opiate, and he will have a long sleep."

When she had moved away again, he

brought his eyes back from the window to gaze on me; such strange, changed eyes! "She says I shall sleep a long sleep. In case it is so long that I never wake—and this would be a merciful ending—as you would know, if you had felt a tithe of what the pain is when it racks me! But never mind that, I am sorry I said that. It will all soon be over. I must make haste to speak while I can. First, I ask you to forgive me. I see many things clearer now. It was my fault. I ought to have known it couldn't answer. I understand something about it now—too late. You never deceived me. I knew you didn't care for me. Then, when you felt as if you were in my power, you didn't trust me; you began to hate me. That was it, wasn't it? Well, I think you misjudged me. I think you might have trusted me. If I knew myself, I should never have required of you anything you did not choose to give me; you should never have spent one hour with me against your will. Well! That is all past praying for now. What I now want to speak about is this: you are legally my wife; that is done, and cannot be undone. To my wife, I have left everything I possess. I am, or I was, very rich, much richer than you had any idea of. It is you who are very rich now. It is all yours, quite safely yours; no one can touch a farthing of it. I took great pains to make it all secure, that there should be no possibility of trouble."

I had thought of no such contingency. His words were a shock, a horror to me.

"That must not be," I cried out with a voice so shrill as to startle the quiet of the place. "This must not be. Tell me how, to whom——"

"You must have it. You must use it. There is no one else. No one."

"Oh, but, have mercy, as you hope for mercy. Have pity on me, release me, let me free. Think how loathsome your money must be to me after what I have done. It is I who have killed you."

"No; that is not so. It was all my own fault. I have little strength left me, don't make me waste it in contention. You feel now as if you didn't want my money. But, by-and-by, you will feel differently. You think you have wronged me. Well, let me have my harmless revenge. This is my revenge. For a long while past you have been overwrought and out of health. You have worked too hard. When you have put me in my grave, and have

had time to get over the upset all this has been to you, you will look at things differently. You will come to feel the good and the comfort of money, and you will come to think kindly of the man who left it to you. At least this is my hope."

"This cannot be," I answered. "I cannot take it. I must not say that your revenge is cruel, for I don't believe you mean to be cruel. But can't you understand that I simply cannot live upon and use your money—money which is to me the price of blood?"

"Your exaggerated way of looking at things. I must have your promise that it shall be as I wish. It is hard indeed if a dying man is to be denied even such a satisfaction. You know," he went on, "that I have relatives, and you know, too, that I am not proud of them. There is not one among them who would not vilely misuse my money. It is yours, all yours; yours it must remain. Little as you think of me, I am the flower of the flock; the one respectable member of my family. It would be hard indeed for any of my money to pass into their hands."

He did not seem to hear me when I pleaded further; seemed absorbed by his own lines of thought; when I ended—he waited till I ended because his voice was too weak to make itself heard against mine:

"I know you will do what I require of you," he said. "I know I can trust you to respect my wishes. You will not grudge me so harmless a revenge. Time will make it all easy to you."

"Perhaps," in my desperation I suggested, "perhaps you will get well. Perhaps you may live to use your money yourself."

"Do you wish me to get well? Do you wish me to live?"

The expression of his voice and face, a sort of struggle between grim humour and eager hunger touched even my selfish heart.

I boldly answered, "Yes," and my yes was not, at that moment, a lie. But he was wise enough to understand, and he spoke on as if I had said no.

"If you had wished it for love—who knows? Love has worked miracles ere now, or so the poets tell us. Perhaps I believed them enough to believe that my love for you might work the miracle of winning yours for me, in time."

"I would willingly die instead of you," I groaned. "I am sick unto death, heart and soul and body."

"Die instead of me? Yes, I daresay.

But live for me, with me, you could not; you found you could not. And—I—understand."

His eyes closed, his face changed. I thought he was dying, and I called for help. The nurse came. She slightly raised his head upon her arm, and held a glass to his lips. He drank its contents, and murmured, "Good-night." Then, much more distinctly—

"Remember, I have your promise."

His lips moved again, after we both thought he had fallen asleep. It was the nurse who detected what he said.

"He asks you to kiss him, poor soul—poor soul!"

My lips had never before voluntarily touched him. I stooped over him now, and pressed them to his mouth, and on his cold, damp forehead. It was long before I lost the sensation of that contact.

The nurse told me he would probably sleep for hours, and advised that I should go away and get some rest.

"Have I been here very long?" I asked her, recalling the possibility that they were still waiting for me.

"Not half-an-hour; not quite half-an-hour."

"Is anyone waiting?"

"A lady is sitting in a carriage at the door."

I went down to speak to her.

The sun was shining; a sweet, fresh wind was blowing; her heavenly eyes met mine. It was like waking from the evil dreams of a fevered night to the wholesome, morning world. And, in this wholesome, out-door world I craved to stay.

"Take me away with you, anywhere away," is what I tried to say; but, after meeting her eyes, I said instead:

"I am going to stay by him till——"

She gave a little nod of sympathetic understanding and approval, and kissed me. She had drawn me in to sit beside her a moment.

"We shall stay on here a few days with old friends of my husband's. I have written the address ready for you. We do not feel we could leave you now, and so I want you to know that you have friends at hand, ready to help you in any way, when the time comes in which you can be helped."

I did not say one word of acknowledgement, though the comfort I got from her assurance was indescribable. We looked at each other a few moments, holding hands. I think she understood.

Then I returned whence I came.

A ghastly time followed, night and day mingled; and I do not know how long it lasted. Doctors and nurses came and went. He alternated between stupor and paroxysms of agony. Sometimes I lost consciousness, and was taken away and laid on the nurse's bed. But, generally, I sat beside him, assisting literally at his agony. Why I did this, and why I was allowed to do it, I don't know. I had lost all wish to leave him. A fearful sort of attraction chained me to his side. Of course I was supposed to be a heart-broken and devoted wife; perhaps I had some confused notion that it was due to him that I should countenance that idea; perhaps I still hoped to wring from him my release from the burden he had laid upon me. But when, by-and-by, came a day, or days, during which he was free from the stupor of opiates and the delirium of pain, he showed, combined with a touching amount of weakness, so dignified a self-restraint, and so much delicacy of consideration for those about him, that even my hard heart was touched, and I could not bring myself to trouble and agitate him.

One morning—on a morning which followed upon a night of more natural rest than he had yet known—the physicians spoke for the first time of the possibility of partial recovery; that is to say, they began to think it even probable that a helpless and suffering existence might be indefinitely prolonged.

When they told me this, I do not know what I thought and felt. I shrank from knowing then, and I shrink from knowing now. But I remember certain distinct pictures that presented themselves of what our life together would be—he a hopeless cripple, I his constant companion. I try to believe that I should have been that—his constant companion. It was not only that I had no love for him, but also, that I am peculiarly deficient in power of devotion. I have none of that delight in serving and self-sacrifice, which, for many a woman, would sweeten such a lot. I want always to do a thing because I want to do it, and when I want to do it. To do this or that, go here or there, at the will of another is irksome to martyrdom to me.

I watched my own face in a mirror as they spoke with me, and I thought I read there the solution of the problem. "You will die," I told myself. "If he lives, you will die."

They left me without my having spoken

a word, and I stood just as they left me, still looking into the mirror, but no longer seeing myself or any outward thing. I tried, by-and-by, to collect and mentally arrange myself, before I should be called to him. But I was called too soon. He wanted me immediately, the nurse who called me said, and I had, therefore, while still half-dazed and wholly unprepared, to encounter those now so strangely wise and understanding eyes.

"They have been telling you that I may leave this place alive—telling you that I may so far recover as to drag on for years!" he began eagerly.

I just bowed my head.

"Poor woman! How ill you look! Do not distress yourself about things you will never have to suffer. They are quite wrong. I shall never leave this place alive. I understand," he went on, after a pause, "something of what you are going through. You would not be able to run away from me again—my being a helpless cripple would hinder you—and what a life it would be for you beside me! What a life! Never fear, Magsie, you won't be tried. They are quite wrong."

He spoke as indulgently as if speaking to a sick child, and, as he did so, feebly patted my hand lying on the coverlet. His voice was far weaker than I had yet known it, his breath came laboriously, and he stopped between every few words.

"It will all be over soon, very soon. It has been good in you to stay by me; believe me, I am grateful. You will soon be free now—rich and free. Go about the world. Try to forget all this, as you would try to forget a bad dream. Learn to enjoy life, being rich and free." He repeated the last words, "rich and free," lingering over them tenderly, and his great weakness lent a pathetic quality to his voice.

"I think it would be wiser, it certainly would be safer," he began again, after a pause, in a dreamy, meditative way, "for you not to marry. Your money might cause trouble if you married. Besides, I think you are the kind of woman who, being rich, would get no good from marriage. You will be better alone and independent. But mind, I am not dictating to you; I am not even expressing a wish, but a mere opinion. Everything must be as you like. I would not for the world——"

There he paused, then murmured: "How strange, when one is dying, the familiar phrases seem! 'For the world.'"

What is the world to me? What I want to say is, and what I want you to feel, that I desire to leave you absolutely free—rich and free."

Repeating the words, he smiled softly to himself, in pleasure of my pleasant respects, and it was then, this one only me that his living smile ever seemed to me beautiful. Something broke within me—the hardness of my heart, perhaps.

"I cannot, cannot bear it," I cried, and I laid my face down on his hand, and burst into passionate sobbing and crying.

"Don't, don't, don't," came his plaintive admonishment. "I never could bear to see a woman cry, not even a strange woman—and you, Maggie!"

But I sobbed on, making no effort to control myself. The floodgates were opened, and I found some solace in this outpouring.

Presently, a convulsive movement of his hand beneath my cheek made me look up into his face. I saw it coming. I shrieked. Then all was confusion. I was taken away.

I did not see him again alive.

When I saw him after death—I made myself do that—the likeness of the smile I had thought beautiful was sealed and settled on his face. And this is how I remember him.

That night I heard the doctor say:

"A mistake to have let her be here. An uncontrolled nature. Something peculiar in their relation to each other, I fancy; some mystery about her. But for the mental agitation which brought on that final crisis, he might have done well. In fact, he was doing well."

"Have I murdered him twice over, then?" I asked myself. But I did not believe that. He knew; but they did not know.

It has been even worse than I expected, the definite recalling and setting down of all this.

I must stop. My very fingers are so cramped and half-paralysed, that it is hard to hold my pen.

Will there be a story to tell of how his revenge worked—of how the burden of his wealth crushed me?

Of all this I know nothing yet.

I have told how I came by so much money. I have to learn how to use it.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "*The Chilcootes*," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

To Tilly this new world offered many perplexing enigmas which her inexperience could not solve. In Lilliesmuir, the human drama was as little complex as may be, and everybody's motives were so thoroughly known and discussed, that life was quite barren of surprises, and as blameless of ambushes as Salisbury Plain.

Here, on the contrary, it was rich in the unexpected; was no longer ruled by a rough simplicity that was content to do to-day what had been done yesterday in a prosaic routine that clamoured not for change. Here were conventional notions, too, and admitted rules to be regularly enforced; but it was to Tilly as it is to inexperienced travellers who cross a frontier and find the currency all changed, and the language of barter a strange tongue.

To the girl, eager for the untried, it acted as a stimulus. She wanted to understand, to share; above all, to live richly and dramatically and with enduring satisfaction, taking everything that was good in the new, while losing nothing of the old. So she set herself to watch the actors as one who stands aside awhile—a spectator—before taking part in the play.

Her largest opportunities of study were at the dinner-table, where the boarders met after a day spent variously, and relaxed themselves in talk. It is wonderful how a good meal encourages conversational superfluities; those who had been out and about in the busy streets, embroidered their small experiences till they grew into adventures; those, like Major Drew and Mrs. Moxon, who were content to take their peep of the world from drawing-room windows, not to be outdone, fell back upon their memories of the past. Boarders, as a rule, talk a great deal when they meet; it is one way of asserting and maintaining the equality on which the communistic life depends.

The Major, who had been a valiant soldier in his day and had seen service in many lands, seemed to hold it his greatest distinction that he had had cholera and yellow fever, and had once suffered from the plague, and he could not feel on any

terms of intimacy with new people till these biographical particulars were known.

Mrs. Moxon preferred to shine in the light of her late husband's glory, and offered his opinions on all subjects with great liberality; little Miss Dicey, who was a perfect treasury of small facts and details, had always a corroborating anecdote or illustration, and came in like a whole Greek chorus embodied in one small person.

Thus when the Major began :

"When I was with Lawrence before Ishmaelpore——"

She was ready to murmur sympathetically: "Annexation of Oude: beginning of all our troubles."

And when Mrs. Moxon told that oft-repeated tale of the Bishop's visit to the Parsonage, Miss Dicey betrayed an immediate familiarity with the Bishop's private history, and even with the heresies which had disturbed that particular ecclesiastical year. Poor Miss Dicey! She might have been better loved had her mind been less encyclopædic. It is such a wound to one's vanity to have all one's scraps of knowledge forestalled!

"What a wonderful thing it must be to be able to write books!" said Tilly to her neighbour, Mr. Sherrington.

"I have only written one," said he, smiling at her very pleasantly, "and I think, Miss Burton, that I really deserve a laurel wreath for that laudable moderation."

"Why do you stop at one?" she asked. "If I could write one I should want to write fifty." She glanced across at Miss Dicey, who was whispered to have furnished an entire shelf in Mudie's with specimens of the murder and sudden-death order of literature.

"The saving grace of discouragement," he began; but his wife, who had an ear for everything he said, looked up with a quick denial.

"It is all nonsense, Miss Burton," she said; "he is too good for his public, that is all; they are not ready for him yet."

"They are being educated up to me," he said in his lazy, cynical fashion, looking at Tilly with his sad brown eyes. "The School Board is my pioneer; but, unfortunately, time will not halt for the philosopher while it ripens his audience."

The disease of vanity takes so many forms that it may have been that he was vain—not of having written a book, but of having written one too subtle for the general grasp: when a man can console

himself for failure on grounds of personal superiority, he is not much to be pitied. And so between the successful novelist and the unsuccessful essayist there was a burial of the tomahawk and a freedom from envy, jealousy, hatred, and malice, that was beautiful to see, and was a noble example to the other members of this strangely-assorted family.

Madame Drave, a large, blonde woman, with an immobile face, did not help the talk with any native brilliance; but, indeed, it needed no stimulus, as it rippled on without a lapse to the accompaniment of knives and forks, the only listeners being the two silent young people who faced each other at the foot of the board.

In a day or two, however, Tilly noticed that her uncle joined this pair, and he who had at first seemed willing to swell the general stock of reminiscence was now as silent as they. Tilly looked at him with a shade of anxiety.

She passed a hand within his arm when she left the dining-room, and drew him up to their own sitting-room.

"You are quiet, dear," she said. "Is it—are the dinners to your mind?"

"A man's inside is his own, Tilly," he answered with a faint remonstrance, as if she had suggested that the human stomach was framed on "one fixed primordial pattern," "he knows best what to put into it; as for 'quiet,' I take it that you can't do two things well at a time; and, for the matter of that, there's jabbering enough to drown a man's voice if he did want to make it heard."

By which Tilly was fain to hope that the humours of his palate were gratified, even if he were a trifle jealous of the Major's fund of anecdote.

"And you, little lass?" He looked at her with a lightening of his heavy brows.

"Oh, I get enough to eat," she said with a smile; "food for mind as well as body. In Mr. Sherrington's neighbourhood one is always sure of securing the salt and the pepper and the best bits of bread, and he really is very amusing as well."

"Is he? Seems to me a dowf chap; and as for that old body the Major, he would like to make out that nobody has set foot out of England but himself. 'Been much abroad!' says he, and then begins with his India and his China. Tell you what, my lass, there's no call to tell him or anybody where my pile was made. It's there, and

I'm ready to spend it, and that's enough for them."

This was an unexpected phase; but after all, it was one that need not have perplexed Tilly. The new surroundings had their influence on her uncle too, and it was natural enough that, in taking what he considered an upward step in the social scale, he should wish to practise a reticence about a past that was likely enough to be misunderstood. Those fine, finicking people, what had they in common with his youth and manhood, with all its profound vicissitudes; those who had grasped no idea of "life," except as it displayed itself in conventional European travel? It was enough for them to know that he was rich; rich enough to buy them all up any day and never feel the poorer for it.

But this consciously practised reserve sat hardly on him, and showed him at his worst; it fitted him as uneasily as his dress clothes. His garrulous boastfulness had been natural to him, and it had therefore been more or less interesting to other people; Mr. Sherrington had looked at him with mournful gaze, as if he meditated weaving him into an article on primitive man; to Miss Dicey he had already suggested the outline of a new romance. But with his silence all this was changed. He ceased to be interesting, having no other way of putting himself forward, and he was too rustic, awkward, plain, to serve an ornamental purpose; his attitudes and actions were strained; and he entirely lacked the languid, artificial grace and ease that made Mr. Sherrington so picturesque a personage.

He resented all efforts to draw him out, and he devoted himself with a sort of dogged patience to his dinner, eating of everything with strict impartiality, and drinking wine of his own ordering. Major Drew drank ale, and Mr. Sherrington claret of a thin vintage; and it was partly with a feeling of pride that no one but himself could afford a costly brand, and partly with the old, more wholesome instinct of hospitality, that Uncle Bob insisted on sharing with his neighbours.

It was this note of an undiminished appetite that somewhat consoled Tilly; but when he began to carry his fits of abstraction back with him to their own sitting-room; when his quiet moods did not always at once yield to her little jests and gay outlines of conversations held downstairs, or things she had seen while out shopping, a little thread of unhappiness began to weave itself into her gaiety.

"Are you sure you like being here?" she implored. "If not, why need we stay? We can go back to the hotel to-morrow, or back to Lilliesmuir"—the suggestion cost her a little moral heroism—"if you think best."

"Back to Lilliesmuir!" he echoed, with one of his old, loud laughs. "Are you tired 'supposin'?" Tilly? Is it too dull for you here? Why don't you go and buy a new gown, or get one of these folks downstairs to take you to a theatre?"

"Dull? Why, it's ever so much more lively than at the hotel." She made the admission without thought. "I see more of my cousin and of his cousin; and there are all the people in the house; and there is Mrs. Popham's to-morrow. Oh, it is charming for me—but it is you I think of."

"Well, then, you needn't," said he bluntly. "I'm as right as can be. We'll stop here a bit, now we are here. It will do well enough to start with, though I don't say it will do to end with. You've a right to look for something better than this, and one day you'll get your rights, or I'll know the reason of it."

"I want nothing more," she protested. "Nothing at all, unless you will go out with me now."

But he pleaded an engagement.

"I'm expecting Behrens," he said. "It's time he was here now. He said he would drop in about three."

It seemed to Tilly that Mr. Behrens was always dropping in; sometimes he carried Mr. Burton off with him, sometimes he remained in the quiet sitting-room and held him there in talk. To herself, Mr. Behrens was always the kind and pleasant elderly friend; he brought her flowers and books, chosen with a nice discrimination of her taste, which happily had remained unvitiated as when she had pastured in Cousin Spencer's severely chosen library; he paid her little compliments which she accepted smilingly; but it was, after all, her uncle he came to see. He was very unobtrusive, and having by some magic obtained the latch-key for which young Runciman yearned, he was able to come and go unseen, even of Mrs. Moxon.

It was wonderful what a great deal he and her uncle found to talk about, and it was not surprising that she began to connect Uncle Bob's new behaviour with his friend's visits. There was a light in his eye after an interview or a walk with Behrens, and sometimes, too, a grim,

almost an exultant smile on his lips; and what meant all those clumsily veiled allusions, those hints of distant splendour to be one day reached?

When she questioned him he would shake his head, or make a feint of changing the subject by a half-angry insistence that she should spend more money, and make more show. If she supposed that he couldn't afford it, she needn't suppose it any longer. He bought a carriage for her in which she and Honoria, and sometimes little Miss Dicey—only too happy to sit on the narrow seat—took daily airings in the Park, and did a vast amount of shopping; and with the very beginnings of spring she was to have riding lessons from the best master London could produce.

She sighed regretfully for the old times, when she possessed his full confidence, and when his boasting had had a healthy naturalness that gave it a sanction; but while his pride in her and his love for her remained unabated, increased perhaps, if anything, she could not be long unhappy. She had, too, so many other claims on the leisure of her thoughts, for life pulsed now at a full beat, and was rich with new and varied interests.

She was waiting one afternoon for her cousin, when they were at last together to pay the long-talked-of visit to Fulham. Uncle Bob had gone off with the mysterious Behrens in the carriage, which she yielded to them very freely. She was standing in the window of the sitting-room, waiting for John, who was a trifle late. The window, by some afterthought of the architect's, was a square one, and was furnished with a curtain, which made it into a recess. Tilly stood in this enclosure, watching idly for the figure that would presently hurry round the corner. She had secured the last of the many fastenings on her long gloves, and was quite still, following her uncle in her thoughts, and perplexing herself anew over his behaviour, when she became conscious of some other presence in the room.

A housemaid came to dust, no doubt, and, satisfying herself thus easily, she did not move. No housemaid was ever shod with such slippers of silence, however; neither flapping of duster nor switch of broom signalled her arrival, though a faint sound hinted to Tilly's quick ear the opening of a drawer. With a vague thrill, half of fear, though the day was bright and even brightly sunny, she parted a fold of the curtain and looked out. Madame

Drave stood before her, stooping over a small writing-table that was the joint property of her uncle and herself, and sufficed for their sparing correspondence. Madame had opened the door so noiselessly that her entrance had been unperceived, and now, with large white hands, she was deftly turning over the papers, without so much as a betraying rustle. These were not very many in number; but she examined them all with some care, and restored them precisely. From the table she passed to the mantelpiece, which, with every other available part of the room, was crowded with useless purchases—nicknacks, jewellery, photographs, china—bearing testimony rather to Uncle Bob's spending powers than to the correctness of his taste.

With a systematic neatness that was admirable in its way, and hinted at long practice, Madame peered into vases and pots, fluttered the leaves of books, examined the trinkets sent in for Tilly's choice. Her scrutiny was not eager, as if she were moved by mere vulgar curiosity; it was calm, unhurried, as if it were but a necessary duty she was performing. Tilly watched her with a fascinated gaze; her indignation crossed by a thread of amusement, as she pictured Madame's guilty start when confronted with this involuntary witness of her deeds.

Madame probably would not have started at all; but Tilly was denied the satisfaction of making herself known, for a sound from below caught Madame's ear, and took her from her task.

She quitted the room as quietly as she had entered it, leaving Tilly with an oddly bewildering sense of doubt as to whether she had not dreamed the little scene. Madame was too clever, too fastidiously neat, to leave any trace of her presence. She had examined, weighed, commented; but she had removed nothing; she had replaced everything as she had found it, even to a vase that had been set perilously near the edge of a bracket. When Tilly put out a hand to steady it, it fell with a crash and broke in fragments at her feet.

"My hands are much less clever than Madame's," she said to herself; "I wonder, does it take long practice to touch things so?"

The sound that had caused Madame's disappearance was John Temple's knock, and he now came in a little hurried and flurried; but the apology on his lips was arrested by Tilly's look of preoccupation.

"John," she said, looking at him, "do I look as if I had been asleep?"

"No," he said; "but you look as if you had been scared."

"So I have," she nodded. "I've seen a ghost, a daylight ghost; and I think it's more disagreeable than a night-time one."

"Did it break this?" he asked, noticing the fragments at his feet, and stooping to pick them up. "It must have been a very clumsy spirit, for it has smashed it beyond repair."

"No, I did that. Never mind it; I don't know whether it is valuable or not, but Uncle Bob will be only too glad of the excuse to buy another. Let us go out. I want some fresh air."

"Won't you tell me what frightened you?" he asked. "If it's a case of knocking anybody down, I'm good for that."

"I don't think I'm afraid so much as angry," she said, laughing off her vexation; "if my ghost comes again, I'll send for you."

On their way out a smiling maid waylaid Tilly.

"Mistress said I was to be sure to ask if there was nothing you or the gentleman would like before you go out!" she said. "Mistress would have come herself, but she has been lying down since lunch with a headache."

"Has she—since lunch?" said Tilly gravely. "No, thank you, Mary, I am going to have tea at a friend's house to-day."

"You will ride?" John asked, when they got out on the pavement. "We'll get a hansom round the corner."

"No, I mean to walk," she said. "Uncle Bob has relieved me of our hired chariot to-day. A whole carriage to oneself is sometimes an oppressive piece of grandeur."

"I haven't had too much of it to make oppressive," he said, with a laugh. "I share my carriage with everybody who has twopence in his pocket."

"I know," she said quickly—"an omnibus. I want to ride on one—on the outside of one. I've been inside, but the outside looks much nicer. We'll take one now."

She decided so confidently that he was taken aback, and only uttered a feeble protest.

"Not the thing to do!" she murmured.

"Cousin John, I beseech you don't join the chorus who make that their refrain. Other girls have done it, therefore I can and will do it."

"But you are different from other girls."

"Am I? I am quite as able to enjoy myself, and why should I be punished by being put inside with all the bundles and babies? We'll go home in a hansom, and that will satisfy the proprieties," she said with a smile that made him quite willing to accept this concession. He had made his protest; but he really saw no reason why her whim should not be gratified.

Granted youth, health, and an easy conscience, and almost anything makes for happiness. It was pleasant to be carried along, high above the crowd, the sharpness of the air tempered by the rarely bright sunlight, which made the spectacle of the streets as enchanting as a scene of a play. So, at least, it seemed to John Temple, as Tilly turned towards him with an air of triumph over her little success, and a renewed gaiety that swept away her passing sense of annoyance. He recalled a similar journey on that night when he first saw her; but with every lurch of the swinging omnibus he had been going from her then; now she was at his side, looking up at him, chatting to him, calling him cousin.

He stood in amaze before his own good fortune. He was twenty-six; he was without distinction; not in the least imposing, perhaps even commonplace, unless it were that certain qualities of heart that inspired trust and liking in others, saved him from this last reproach. Among these was a ready willingness to allow others to shine, and an enjoyment of their brilliance that won him a good many friends, and a habit of accepting the good-natured point of view that rescued him from the dislike of any but the censorious, who would have all men as they are. Such qualities are, after all, not so abundantly plentiful, that a man need be scorned because they are all the record he has to show.

Of this fibre was the cousin who bowed gaily along towards Fulham at Tilly's side, with a look on his face that comes earlier to most faces, but is seldom more informed with reverence and humility, and a nameless wonder at the graciousness of his lot.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dams Durdan," "My Lord Conceil,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER III.

RETRIBUTION.

THE day of the trial had dawned at last. Sir Roy Kenyon sat in his private sitting-room with his untasted breakfast before him, marvelling that still no word had come from Adrian Lyle.

There could be no further postponement now. The line of defence must remain, and the stigma of indelible dishonour would be for ever on the life of this poor child, who, to all intents and purposes, was his nephew's wife.

Keenly and bitterly did he feel the humiliation. More bitterly than ever, since he had known what it was to miss the clear, simple counsel and the ready sympathy of a man whom he confessed he had never fully appreciated till this hour of suffering.

Time passed on. His anxious eyes turned, ever and again, to the clock on the mantel-piece; his face looked worn and aged, as if by years of trouble; all its bright good-humour and genial glow were extinguished by this one feeling of suspense and dread.

Ten o'clock was the hour fixed for the trial. It wanted a quarter to ten—and still no word or sign of Adrian Lyle.

Five minutes—ten minutes—passed. Then Sir Roy nerved himself to face the ordeal before him. He rang for the man to remove the breakfast things. For the last time he asked that oft-repeated ques-

tion: "Is there no message, no letter, for me?"

For the last time came the same monotonous answer: "None, sir."

With a foreboding, for which he could not account, Sir Roy left the hotel and took his way to the Court-house. The barrister who was to defend Gretchen procured him a place near himself. To him, as to the waiter, Sir Roy put the same anxious question, and with the same result. Adrian Lyle had not returned, and had not written.

A faint stir in the crowded court. They were bringing in the prisoner.

Sir Roy felt the blood rush to his brow, as he looked once again on that sad and lovely face—lifted with a child's piteous bewilderment to the keen and pitiless scrutiny of those curious eyes.

Yet there was something in it to-day, so it seemed to him, not altogether the same; something—a struggle—an effort at recollection. He could not have described what it was; but the girl's gesture, as she pushed back the loose, thick hair from her brow, sent a thrill of hope and yet of fear to his heart. Gradually the look in her eyes became steady and intense. She seemed to be listening to the barrister who was formally opening the case; but no comprehension of its details, as yet, penetrated to the dull and clouded brain.

Her extreme youth, and the beauty of the sad, young face, that was like a beaten-down snowdrop, insensibly moved all hearts. As incident after incident, fact after fact were linked together in the chain of evidence, there was less of horror than of pity in the eyes that turned to her. The instinctive feeling in all minds was "surely there is some error here;

those frail, white hands so helplessly clasped, could never have been guilty of such a crime."

The case having been stated, the first witness was called—the man who had seen her by the little mound which had proved to be her child's grave.

Then came the medical evidence and that of the police.

Gretchen's counsel cross-examined both, but with little result in favour of the accused.

He then commenced his defence, commenting briefly and pithily on the weakness of the evidence, which had failed to prove that, in the first instance, the prisoner was the mother of the child; and in the next, that the child had not died from purely natural causes. He then called his first witness—the Reverend Adrian Lyle.

Sir Roy started and glanced eagerly round; then he drew a deep breath of relief as he saw Adrian approach and take his stand in the witness-box. He looked at the defending barrister, and saw that he was reading a paper just handed to him by the Clerk of the Court.

The contents seemed to give him great satisfaction. He looked at Adrian Lyle, and nodded; then referred to his notes, and proceeded to the business of examining the witness.

This was the ordeal for which Sir Roy had steeled himself. It taxed all his self-command to sit there and listen to that grave, rich voice, telling so plainly and clearly the story of his nephew's baseness, and yet he knew it was inevitable. The name was bound to come out, and Adrian Lyle was sworn to speak the truth on behalf of the poor, forsaken girl.

His evidence created a great sensation in the Court. The fact of her leaving home in a condition to which he was obliged to assent was now firmly established; the state of her mind at the time of her flight was plain enough to all that crowd of intent and wondering listeners, and Sir Roy's head bent lower and lower in its agony of shame as he traced that miserable history, step by step from its first impulse of innocent compassion, to selfish betrayal and unconscious crime.

Adrian Lyle's voice ceased. There was a momentary lull. Then the counsel for the defendant rose again and called a name, at which Sir Roy lifted his head in momentary surprise. He saw a dirty, feeble, old crone hobbling to her place, and

he heard what no one else seemed to hear, a faint, low cry from the pale lips of the prisoner. Her eyes were fastened on that evil-looking face, with something of horror and fear in their fixed regard; her hands, before loosely linked, now clasped themselves with trembling eagerness on the rail before her.

Then across the hush and stillness of expectancy, came the low, harsh tones of the old woman's voice giving the statement for which she was asked. She said: "My name is Phoebe Willa. I live in Stony Hollow, four miles or so from the parish of Leawood. I remember the prisoner yonder. I found her in the wood below my cottage one morning early, about two weeks ago. I had gone to get wood, and she was sitting on the trunk of a tree all alone, and seemed to be very ill and not quite right-like in her head. I told her to come along wi' me, and took her into the cottage. It's a lonesome place, and no one ever comes by; and I knew 'twas no use to leave her so. I did what I could, and all went right, though she seemed in mortal terror as to how some one would find her, and begged me to hide her and tell no one, and seeing she was a lady, and well dressed, and so young, and so pretty, I thought it a bit strange. But 'twas naught to me so long as she was all right and the child. However, the next day, I saw it was ailing, and at sunset it died."

A visible sensation ran through the Court. Sir Roy felt a touch on his arm, and, looking up, found Adrian Lyle sitting beside him. His face was very white, his eyes haggard and burning, as if with sleepless nights and anxious days.

"It will be all right," he whispered. "I found the one witness we needed, as I told you I should."

The woman resumed.

"I asked the mother what we was to do, and if she hadn't better write to her friends; but she only cried dreadful and said that she had no one in the world to care for her, and that no one would know; and begged me to keep her secret; and to humour her I promised, for she seemed terrible feverish and excited. So I made her comfortable for the night, and wrapped the child in some of her own linen and laid it beside her, for she would have it so; and then I made up the fire and sat down in my old chair, for she had the bed; and I suppose I dropped off to sleep, for when I woke she was gone and the child too, and never word or clue as to who, or what, she might

ba. Well, I thought as how she'd gone back to her friends—leastways I was sure that if I was wanted I'd be found, and so I was."

"You say, on your oath, that the child died of natural causes, the day after its birth?"

"Certain sure it did," was the answer. "It was a weakly, puling thing, and not full-grown. I wonder it lived an hour."

"Was the mother in a fit condition to leave your roof and journey all the distance to —, where she was found?"

"She said she felt quite strong; but she was a bit fevered, I thought."

"And how comes it that, after circumstances so suspicious, you never mentioned the matter to any of your neighbours, or made any enquiries as to what had become of the prisoner?"

"I've got no neighbours nearer than a matter of four or five mile, and I'm not fond of trudging to them when I'm that bad with rheumatics that I can scarce draw water, or pick up wood. The young woman was old enough to take care of herself. I was a bit frightened when I found she'd gone so sudden-like; but I could do naught, as I told the parson yonder when he found me."

Another witness yet—Old Peggy, from the Laurels.

She deposed to the state of her mistress's health and mind on the day when she had left her home. She said that the prisoner had evidently received some bad news brought the first thing in the morning by a "foreign gentleman," who had upset her mistress terrible. Then Mr. Lyle had called, and she seemed to get quieter and better; but all day she was crying and fretting, and would eat nothing. Towards evening two strange ladies came, also foreign, and, after seeing them, her mistress grew rapidly worse and had a succession of fainting fits. They put her to bed, and one of the ladies said that she would watch by her all night. However, in the morning her mistress was not in the house, and they never knew what had become of her. One of the foreign ladies went away. She seemed to be a nun, or Sister of Mercy, or something of that sort. The other saw Mr. Lyle, and she and Mr. Lyle both said that they would find out where her mistress was. The foreign lady used to be away all day, and come back just to sleep. One morning Mr. Lyle came very early, about six o'clock, and took her away with him. They had said nothing to witness of where they

were going; but she heard during the day that her mistress had been found, and was in prison. Didn't believe it till she was subpoenaed as a witness; knew nothing of the foreign gentleman; had only seen him twice, and each time he had always upset her mistress; didn't know his name; but could recognise him if she saw him."

Any more witnesses for the defence? Yes; one more.

A whisper, a faint murmur, as the wigged heads of the barristers bend towards one another. Sir Roy's face is hidden from sight; his heart is full of sad and painful thoughts.

"She will be saved," he tells himself; "but oh! the shame and horror of this wretched history; when will that be forgotten by all those who have heard it?"

A name is called; but he never heeds it. Another witness! Why do they want another witness? He lifts his head; he looks half wearily, half curiously at the tall, veiled figure standing in the box.

Someone speaks to her; she lifts her veil. He sees a beautiful face, cold and white as a statue, proud as a queen; he sees the curved lips that touch the book she holds in her hand; and then, his own face blanched and grey, Sir Roy turns to Adrian Lyle, and lays one trembling hand upon his arm.

"Who," he cries, in a hoarse and terrible whisper, "is that?"

Adrian Lyle looks amazed at the grey face, the shaking lips.

"That lady?" he answered. "It is Anna von Waldstein."

"And why is she here?"

"She is Gretchen's mother."

A stir in the court; a hoarse cry; the movement of many figures; the sound of frightened voices.

"Make way there! A gentleman in a fit."

The crowd parts and sways aside. There is silence profound as death. For surely something terrible as death itself has laid its icy hand upon the changed and awful face of Sir Roy, who, altered from all likeness to himself, is borne out and away to the air and the sunlight, and the smile of the glad, blue sky, to all the mockery of life and nature, which breathes around and over the senseless form, on which the finger of Heaven has branded the one word, "Retribution."

CHAPTER IV. "LOYAL TO YOUR FAITH."

NIGHT has fallen—dark, still, and soft with starry splendour—night bringing joy, and rest, and peace of balmy slumber to some, yet filled with dread and haunted by dark shapes of sin, and sorrow, and bitter memories to others.

There are lights burning dimly in a sick room, and figures passing to and fro, but on the bed one figure lies motionless and unresponsive, the heavy, stertorous breathing its only sign of life. Money can do much, and money has secured the best advice, the best attendance; but money cannot give back speech to the silent lips, intelligence to the numbed brain, motion or power to the stricken limbs.

In the full possession of life, strength, and energy, he had been struck down as a tree that the lightning tears. Powerless and speechless he lay there, each function of Nature arrested, thought, feeling, mind, all fled from that inert mass of speechless and reasonless flesh, a combination of physical forces of no more value than a stone by the wayside.

Adrian Lyle sits by the bed of the paralysed man, nor leaves it all that terrible night. It seems as if the accomplishment of one task meant for him but the commencement of another. For his energy and determination have saved Gretchen. She has been acquitted; she is no longer condemned to the horrors of that prison cell, but is safe under her mother's care, and beneath the same roof that sheltered himself.

The gladness of relief which had come to him, with the knowledge of that unanimous verdict, was in itself strength and hope and rest. The long, terrible fear was over—over for ever. That thought was with him through the long night vigil by the side of this stricken man. Come what might, she was safe, and, if in Heaven's good time that cloud should be lifted from the poor numbed brain, and reason once more shed its light over the lovely face—oh! then, he told himself, his reward would be complete; he could thank Heaven, with all his heart, that he had been of even the smallest service in her need, no matter at what pain, at what cost to himself.

The night waned. The chill and change of atmosphere bespoke the approach of dawn. Adrian Lyle rose and went softly to the window and raised the blind. As he touched it, a faint sound caused him

to look round. The sick man was trying to raise himself in the bed. In a second he was beside him, and the nurse, starting from her chair, came to the other side. There was a change in the face. The eyes eager, wild, almost terrible, in their impotent desire, seemed beseeching something, or some one, to come to his aid. Hoarse and unintelligible words fell from the distorted mouth. They could not, with the best will, comprehend what he meant, and his efforts became agonising.

"Perhaps he can write," suggested the nurse.

Adrian Lyle took a pencil and sheet of paper, and placed them before the sick man. The power of will was stronger than the inert fingers. He scrawled something, and looked eagerly at Adrian Lyle. He could make out:

"Gretchen!"

"She is safe," he answered. "Do not distress yourself; she is quite safe."

Sir Roy leant back with a deep-drawn sigh. Presently the restless eyes again fixed themselves on the young clergyman's face. Again the paper and pencil were in requisition. This time the word "Alexis" appeared, and another that looked like "Send."

Adrian Lyle nodded.

"I sent a messenger to the Abbey last night," he said. "Your daughter will be here in a few hours. Do you wish to see her?"

"Yea."

"I will bring her to you as soon as she arrives."

Then they laid him back on the pillows, and the restless eyes closed; the breathing grew quicker.

Adrian Lyle looked at the nurse.

"Is it a good sign?" he asked. "Will he recover?"

The woman shook her head doubtfully.

"He may," she said, "partially. There is certainly an improvement. Who is the lady he expects?"

"His daughter."

"Perhaps she may do him good. One never can tell how these cases will end. If it is only a slight stroke he may get back his speech, or partly the use of his limbs; but he'll never be the same man again, never."

And, with these words ringing in his ears, Adrian Lyle left the sick room to take the rest which he so sorely needed. He wondered in his heart what Alexis Kenyon would do or say in a place and scene

like this; wondered, too, whether anything so humanising as a tear had ever dimmed those cold, proud eyes.

And, with that wonder still in his mind, he fell asleep from sheer exhaustion, and woke only at a summons from the nurse.

"Miss Kenyon is here, and waiting to see you; for Sir Roy is asleep, and the doctor will not allow him to be disturbed."

Ten minutes after receiving that message Adrian Lyle entered Sir Roy's private sitting-room. So much had his mind been absorbed of late, that it was not until he stood face to face with Alexis Kenyon that he remembered their last parting. Yet the sting of her insult no longer rankled in his mind; he felt so great a pity for the spoilt and capricious child of fortune deprived of lover and father at one and the same moment. For something told him that Neale Kenyon would never be her husband now.

She did not advance to meet him; only stood there in the centre of the room; the dark furs at her throat loosened and thrown back; her face more like a delicate flower than ever, raised in questioning wonder and expectation.

"What has happened?" she asked, her voice uncertain and tremulous. "I came to see my father. I was told that you were with him. Is he ill?"

"Yes," answered Adrian Lyle, gravely. "He is very ill. Otherwise we would not have troubled you to come here."

She turned very white. He saw her lips quiver. Then she sank down on a chair beside her.

"Will you tell me," she said faintly, "what is the matter?"

Then, very gently and delicately, Adrian Lyle narrated the circumstances of the seizure and the gravity of the case, which at its most favourable termination would only restore her father to her a wreck of the strong and hearty man she had last seen.

She listened in perfect silence, the colour did not return to her face or lips. He almost feared she would faint.

When he ceased speaking, she lifted her head and looked at him. There were great tears in her eyes; she shivered, as if with cold.

"You have done all this for him," she said in a low, unsteady voice. "How can I thank you? It is like coals of fire—indeed—I, who had wronged you—insulted you——"

"Do not speak of it," he answered. "You had only heard a distorted version of the story, and I could not blame you for being faithful to your cousin. When Sir Roy heard my explanation, he was perfectly satisfied. I never thought again of what you had said. How could you tell whether Bari had spoken the truth or not?"

A deep flush stained the clear, white skin. Her eyes sank before that calm and noble gaze.

"I knew," she said, in a sudden passion of self-accusation, "I knew well enough that you could not have done a base or cruel action; but I would not believe then——"

"No," he said gently, "and I do not blame you. You were loyal to your faith in Neale. I could not have wished you otherwise, even to save myself pain."

"Loyal to her faith in Neale!" She whispered it to herself over and over again. Loyal to her faith—she, so proud, so callous, so arrogant, indifferent to praise or blame, to love or friendship! She loyal! She could almost have laughed aloud in the ironic bitterness of her mood; but with an effort she controlled herself.

"You judge others by yourself," she said. "It is an error, but a very noble one. Still, before I go to my father's side, I should like to feel that you are not my enemy, that you have forgiven me."

"Pray say no more," he interrupted, as he took the hand she extended to him. "There was no need of forgiveness, but, if you wish assurance of it, I give it frankly with all my heart."

"Thank you," she said. The proud lips quivered. The beautiful face grew strangely soft. It seemed to her that the touch of his hand, the kind and truthful glance of the deep, grave eyes, broke up the ice of hardness and pride within her heart, leaving only a sense of bitter shame and intense humiliation at the memory of the scene which he had declared forgotten. But she knew that she could never forget it, and the recollection fretted her with the mortification of a strong nature which was itself betrayed into momentary weakness.

In the midst of these thoughts, she remembered her father and his danger, and turned to Adrian Lyle once more.

"May I not go to him now?" she said hurriedly. "I promise you that I will be calm and self-controlled. You need not fear."

"He is asleep just now, and must not be disturbed."

"That is all the better," she answered. "I will slip into the room, and when he wakes he will find me by his side."

"Very well," said Adrian Lyle quietly. "The doctors knew you were coming. I suppose they would not refuse you admission."

He left the room, and she followed.

He wondered a little that she had asked no question of the trial, or of Gretchen's fate. But he thought she was too absorbed in her fears and anxiety for her father to remember what, in the first instance, had led to this strange and alarming seizure; for Adrian Lyle attributed it to nothing but the anxiety of mind, the shock, and dread, and serious worry, which all this scandal had occasioned the proud old Baronet.

Not for a moment had he associated it with the sudden appearance of Anna von Waldstein, or his answer to Sir Roy's question. What could there have been in common between these two lives, which in any way should shock or trouble either at this time? The idea was too unlikely and preposterous for consideration.

It was carelessly pushed aside as he led Alexis Kenyon to that mournful chamber; it was forgotten entirely as he closed the door, and crossed the long corridor, and knocked for admission at another room situated at some distance from the suite which Sir Roy had engaged.

A voice bade him enter, and he did so, his heart beating wildly, a look of feverish expectancy in his eyes. They flashed eager questions to the woman who rose at his entrance, pale and troubled, yet with something which was almost gladness in the beautiful face that had lost all its hardness and pride.

"I thought you would come," she said eagerly. "Thank Heaven she is asleep still. The draught the doctor gave her has at least brought her rest. She has slept now for ten hours."

"Did she ask any questions? Did she seem disturbed?" asked Adrian Lyle, as he took the chair to which Anna von Waldstein pointed.

"No, she seemed quite content," she said. Then her voice broke. She covered her face from his compassionate eyes.

"How she is changed!" she cried. "It wrings my heart to see her. Would to Heaven I could bring him here now to see his handiwork!"

"Heaven will bring it home to him, I doubt not," said Adrian Lyle solemnly.

"In a month at farthest he should be here," she went on feverishly. "Well, he will find he has not a simple, ignorant child to deal with now. For every hour of her misery there shall be a heavy reckoning. Two lives wantonly destroyed, and he, the murderer, goes unscathed. Is this Heaven's justice?"

Adrian Lyle was silent. Stormy passions would rise within his heart whenever he remembered that base and selfish coward, who had lied to his very face, and then sent his miserable tool and spy to dig a pitfall for his feet, and throw on him the shame and disaster of this poor child's fate.

He had been wont to say that his heart acknowledged no enemy; but he could say so no longer, for his horror and dislike of Kenyon, and his indignation at the very thought of Bari, were far opposed to Christian serenity and long-suffering.

"Heaven keep us apart," he prayed inwardly, knowing that in his heart there sprang, with a demon's strength, the fierce, mad desire for vengeance—human vengeance—life for life, suffering for suffering, shame for shame; knowing, too, that when his hour came, he could and would deal it unsparingly, despite the futility of any deed or word to undo the bitter past, to give back the lost innocence, the lost joy, the lost purity and beauty of soul to the broken-minded thing which was but the shell of that Gretchen he remembered.

Silent and absorbed in thought he sat there, and the woman by his side was silent too; unknowing of what still lay beyond the tragedy of her child's life; unknowing what further ill might lurk almost at her own threshold.

So strange, so subtle are the mysteries of Fate; so weak and yet so strong those slender shreds which bind life to life and heart to heart, until the net is fast and strong and all complete, and neither strength nor will can break it clear and free from the limbs its fetters and the actions it controls.

That long silence was broken at length by a sound so strange that both Adrian Lyle and his companion started and looked at each other with paling faces and eyes full of awe and almost of fear. The sound was that of low, plaintive singing.

As he held his breath and listened to the voice, something familiar in the air struck on Adrian Lyle's ear, and carried his

thoughts back to a summer night, and the ebb and flow of quiet waters, and a girlish voice expressing a wish that impulse decided him to gratify.

It was all so long ago—so terribly long ago. He felt himself trembling with the rush of memories; then the voice ceased as suddenly as it had begun.

He rose to his feet—a sort of passionate tumult in his heart for a moment deprived him of calmness. He never realised what that agitation betrayed. He crossed the room, and went to the piano, and, opening it, struck a few chords, and softly continued the same air which he had sung for Gretchen once, what she in some chance moment of memory had slowly and falteringly repeated behind that closed door.

The thrill of hope in his heart lent his voice the magic of an angel's melody. Softly, passionately, entreatingly, the rich, full tones breathed forth their prayer, and the listener sat there spell-bound, her eyes on the door, which slowly, doubtfully opened, revealing a figure loosely robed in white—a figure slender, shadowy as a vision, with pale, wan face, and eyes which looked in awed and almost child-like wonder from out a veil of shrouding hair.

Adrian Lyle felt her presence, but he dared not trust himself to look. His voice grew softer—trembled—broke. Then a low, strange cry reached his ears. He turned—it was a moment such as life could never give again. The eyes that met his own gave back recognition, wonder, delight. The low, faltering words spoke out his own name.

"And it was you," she cried, and laughed in pretty, gleeful triumph. "You—and you never told us! I said that there was no other such voice in all the world. But why are you here—now?" She glanced around almost fearfully, and Adrian Lyle watched her spell-bound—not daring to move or speak. She put up her hand to her head with the old, bewildered gesture. "Oh, I remember," she went on slowly. "This is not Venice. That was all long ago."

Her arms dropped to her side. Piteously her eyes turned to him.

"Oh, help me," she cried. "I can't remember. Something has happened—tell me what it is. I know you—you were always so kind to me. Why am I here, and where is Neale?"

Not to save his life could Adrian Lyle have spoken. As if wondering at his

silence she came nearer. She shook back the bright, curling masses of her hair, and stretched out her trembling hands.

"Won't you speak?" she cried imploringly. "All is dim, unreal, confused; but your face is like a friend's face, and I know that you are Adrian Lyle."

AT A GREAT LONDON FIRE.

IN former days, when from surrounding suburbs the glare of a great fire was seen on the horizon, people were content to watch the distant glow from garden walls and upper windows, and wait for the morning papers to tell them what it was all about. We have changed all that, and now, when the red pennant is waving over the city, while fire engines are thundering through the streets and flying crowds are hurrying to the scene from every quarter, trains, omnibus, cabs, and trams, discharge their quota to the gathering.

It is Saturday night, a fair summer's evening, beautiful even in a London suburb; the horizon of roofs and chimneys becomes soft and mellow in the roseate glow; deep shadows lie among gardens and groves. A festive holiday aspect is shown by things in general. Then there is a change. The boys of the quarter, who have been noisily pursuing their holiday sports, disappear with magical celerity, greatly to the advantage of the interests of calm and tranquillity. But the quietude is soon broken by hurried footsteps; distant shouts are in the air, and a rumble like that of artillery; while, against the cool evening sky, rises a flushed and angry pillar of vapour, and soon the glow of sunset is replaced by the portentous glare of a huge but distant fire. There is no occasion to ask questions; the news is in the air as to where the fire is, and the certainty that it is a big one. It is miles away, and yet there is a general movement in that direction; we hurry to the station; hundreds of other people have had the same impulse; and the ticket barriers just now almost deserted are at once occupied by a miscellaneous crowd. All along the way the red flush is in the sky, growing brighter and more distinct. We are now passing through a great terminus where trains from the country are rumbling in, the carriages, all tinted with the glare, and the faces of their occupants showing white and distinct as they peer wonderingly out at the strange

sight. "Is it always like this in London?" asks a country youth, quite scared at the notion of having come to such a pandemonium.

And now the moon rises over the housetops, red and threatening, twisted and distorted in the vaporous medium, as red and terrible-looking as the great flare alongside it. "The moon! it's no moon," cry some; "it's another big fire." The notion of such a simultaneous breaking forth of big fires is rather alarming; but happily the moon asserts herself, and draws proudly away from the human anthill below. And now the great banner of crimson vapour is dotted all over with sparks and flying masses of fire; the roofs about seem all alight, and a great tongue of flame shoots upwards into space. It is a marketing neighbourhood, and long thoroughfares pricked out with hundreds of lamps are full of stalls and barrows, for the crowd of Saturday-night buyers. But the crowd has moved off in the direction of the fire; the long, lighted streets are almost deserted. Here and there a distracted mother calls for her lost children, but these, too, have gone firewards.

It is strange after this to come out into the streets which border on the scene of the conflagration; to be caught up and hurried along by the stream of people; the tall, handsome houses of an aristocratic quarter are on one side rosy red with the reflections of the fire, and through unaccustomed streets pours a mighty traffic, with strange, portentous noises, cries, and shouts, and a general roar of voices from all sides. Pale, eager faces appear at all the windows; shops are hurriedly being closed; everywhere, in courts, passages, among mews and stables, round unexpected corners, eddying back from unknown courts—everywhere penetrates the eager crowd: climbing on walls, hanging on parapets, ready to do and dare anything to get a good view of the big fire.

Already the police have mustered in great force, and have drawn a strong cordon about the doomed block of buildings; for doomed they are, as is seen in one glance at the great mass of flame that throws out flickering tongues towards the sky; at the great cauldron of glowing heat, showing white and dazzling through every opening in the walls; at the burning masses that are thrown upward as if from the crater of some huge volcano. All round the steam fire-engines have taken up their positions, gleaming from their brazen

polished cupolas, and glowing red-hot below in the vehement draught of their boilers, and throwing up streams of sparks and red-hot ashes from their capacious smoke-pipes. And still more are arriving from distant stations, forming into line and joining their connection with marvellous speed and skill. All London lends its forces, and these will be taxed to the utmost to make head against the fire.

What a contrast it is to pass from the roar and pressure of the excited crowd—which is still orderly and tractable, and only wants to see as much as possible, and to enjoy the spectacle to the uttermost—into the calm and orderly precincts of the streets in the occupation of the Brigade. The glare and the heat are intense, houses opposite crackle and frizzle in every morsel of woodwork; nothing is heard but the roar of flames, the crackle and hissing of the streams of water which seem only to feed the fierceness of the blaze; the dark forms of the firemen are outlined against the blinding dazzle, as they mount the tall fire-ladders, creep along roofs, and stand on dizzy heights, with the monstrous fire below roaring for fresh victims. Already we hear of a sad list of casualties: how, in the beginning of the fire, a gallant stand was being made by the firemen with the manual engine which was the first to arrive, when an explosion and fall of ruins buried the engine and scattered destruction amongst those who were working it. Dangers indeed encompass the firemen in the presence of this seething mass of flames, against which the most powerful jets thrown by the steamers seem as the playing of so many squirts. Walls come thundering down; windows and skylights crackle and fall in streams of molten glass; flames burst forth from surrounding houses, cutting off retreat as it seems; everywhere the fire is making its way.

And now the appearance of the fire is indeed majestic and awful; the flames enwrap a tall tower that crosses the centre of the great block of buildings; the flames mount high into the sky with a deafening roar. The tower is crowned by a tall flagstaff, and from the staff floats the national ensign, seen every now and then as flames and vapour are wafted to and fro, the flag proudly streaming out in the midst of all. At once the popular interest is excited, and the attention of the enormous crowd of spectators is concentrated on the fate of the flag. The

tower cracks and crumbles to its full, but still at intervals the flag may be seen waving over destruction and disaster. Then the flagstaff catches fire, the flag is surely doomed to destruction; it is an omen, as it were, that all hope may be averted, and yet there seems no possible escape. But the flames catch and burn away the halliards that secure the flag, and it floats proudly away, safely through the flames and the raging vapours into the dark uncertainty beyond the fire circuit. There is a general cheer for the good old flag.

Down come tower and walls in a general crash, and the flames mount still higher in one fierce rush. Luckily the breeze is soft and gentle, just sufficient to waft away the pall of red smoke, and clear the view of the firemen. With a boisterous wind, such as we have had often enough this summer, no human power could have saved the whole quarter from destruction. For there was a moment when the fire had distinctly gained the upper hand, and yet the whole available force of London's Fire Brigade was on the spot—there was no reserve to fall back upon.

As the circuit of the fire increased, so must the power of the attack upon it have diminished; but then it was seen how gallantly the Brigade could fight against overwhelming odds. Over the buildings destroyed the fire raged triumphantly: everything that could burn was burnt; iron doors crackled up like paper; fire-proof roofs and vaults crumbled to ruins; bricks and stones seemed to melt in the fiery heat. But every outbreak beyond the doomed circuit was quietly, but effectively, repulsed. Puffs of smoke dart here and there from the half-roasted houses in the adjoining streets; flames break out; but there is always a detachment at hand with a jet of water to stop the fresh conflagration.

The scene was now one of awful grandeur, fully realising popular notions of the Judgement Day: a sky overcast with lurid clouds of smoke, and yet with rifts here and there showing the calm, purple vault and the quiet stars; there was the sense of human impotence against the verdict of destruction. The thousands of upturned faces, with the glow of fire upon them, formed a fitting setting for the picture. Birds flew frightened here and there; great moths whirled in the fiery vapour; while the subdued clamour on every side was accompanied by the regular beat of the steamers and the roar of flames.

But the crucial moment had passed; the fire had failed to establish itself elsewhere, and sank sulkily back into its lair. The crowd, with instinctive judgement, sees that the great spectacle has reached its climax and begun to fade; omnibuses, penned into corners and utilised as extempore stands, resume their interrupted journeys; the entangled cabs depart with their fares, who have lost their trains or missed the appointment to which they were hurrying. The suspended marketing has begun again; women rush away to cheapen cabbages and collect their swarm of children. The fourgons, loaded with coke and coal, have ceased to arrive; circulation becomes possible, and only the solid nucleus of the crowd remains.

Still the engines thud and the waters hiss, and the great column of fiery vapour mounts towards the sky; but the rest may be left to firemen and policemen; for us, the clear, purple sky and the moon sailing tranquilly among fleecy clouds.

LAWYERS AT PLAY.

THE painters having recently let the world see that they were not too much taken up with their palettes to allow them to divert themselves and their friends with a Masque, there is nothing wonderful in the fact that the men of law should have followed suit, and demonstrated that Gray's Inn could hold its own with Prince's Hall. Indeed, when we consider that we are living in the Year of Jubilee, and that the lawyers have any amount of precedent to guide and authorise them in such matters, it almost seems as if they had no other course open to them. The Inns of Court may not be able to show such a dining record as the City Companies; but they have made themselves a name for stately revels. Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, the Inner and Middle Temple, have severally entertained Kings and Queens, and the great ones of the earth; but probably the most magnificent exercise of legal hospitality was that, when in the year 1633, the four societies combined to show their loyalty and duty to King Charles and his Queen, by the outward and splendid visible testimony of a Royal Masque.

The King had just revived his father's declaration for the toleration of lawful sports on the Lord's Day, and Mr. Prynne had just published his "Histriomastix," a book against "Interludes" and women

actors ; a direct insult, so the Court party affirmed, to the Queen, who had recently taken part in a pastoral at Somerset House. Thus the grave lawyers determined, by capering for the nonce in motley, to show their disapproval of Mr. Prynne's intemperate satire, and a committee was formed to organise the Masque. Mr. Edward Hyde and Mr. Bulstrode Whitelocke represented the Middle Temple ; Sir E. Herbert and Mr. Selden, the Inner ; Mr. Attorney Noy and Mr. Girling, Lincoln's Inn ; and Sir John Finch, Gray's Inn. The above-named Mr. Whitelocke tells the story in his "Memorials," with much satisfaction at the part he himself bore in the august ceremonial. "To me in particular was committed the whole care and charge of all the musick for this great masque, which was so performed that it excelled any musick that ever before that time had been heard in England. I made choice of Mr. Simon Joy, an honest and able musician, and of Mr. Laws, to compose the airs, lessons, and songs, for the Masque, and to be master of the musick under me."

On Candlemas night the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall was duly decked for the feast. Four gentlemen from each Inn were chosen as Grand Masquers, "suitable for their persons, dancing, and garb for that business"; and to convey these gallants to the Hall, four splendid chariots were constructed ; but on the very eve of the fête two awkward questions arose : Which Inn should occupy the first chariot ? And which Masquer should occupy the leading place in each particular vehicle ? The legal mind was able to settle the second of these without the arbitrament of Fortune. The committee determined that the chariots should be made after the form of those used in the Roman triumphs, and these being of an oval form, there could be no difference of place in them. For the solution of the first question there was no other means found than the hazard of the die, and Gray's Inn won the cast.

The procession mustered at Ely House, in Holborn, and proceeded down Chancery Lane to Whitehall. The Marshal and his men cleared the way, and then came one hundred gentlemen of the Inns of Court, twenty-five from each, the most proper and handsome young gentlemen there in residence. "Every one of these hundred gentlemen were in very rich clothes, scarce anything but gold and silver lace to be seen of them ; and each gentleman had a

page and two lacquies waiting on him. The richness of their apparel and furniture, glittering by the light of a multitude of torches, with the motion and stirring of their mettled horses and the many and gay liveries of their servants, but especially the personal beauty and gallantry of the handsome young gentlemen, made the most glorious and splendid show that ever was beheld in England."

After this gallant display came the element of burlesque, "the antimasque, a gathering of cripples and beggars, mounted on the poorest, leanest jades that could be gotten out of the dirt-carts, and accompanied by music of keys and tongs and the like, snapping and yet playing in a consort before them. After the beggars' antimasque came men on horaback playing upon Pipes and Whistles ; and then came the antimasque of birds. This was an owl in an ivy bush, with other birds round about, little boys put into covers of the shape of those birds, rarely fitted and seated on small horses."

In the next antimasque, rode "a fellow upon a little Horse with a great bit in his mouth, and upon the man's head was a bit with headstall and rains fastened, and signified a protection, who begged a patent that none in the kingdom might ride their horses, but with such bits as they should buy of him.

"Then came another with a bunch of Carrots on his head, and a capon upon his fist, describing a projector, who begged a patent of monopoly, as the first inventor of the art, to feed capons fat with carrots. This antimasque greatly pleased the spectators, because by it information was covertly given to the King of the unfitness and ridiculousness of these projects against the Law ; and the Attorney Noy, who had most knowledge of them, had a great hand in this antimasque of the projectors."

Next came the chariots of the Grand Masquers, duly made in oval form so as to give no invidious preference, and differing only in colour. Gray's Inn headed the procession, followed in order by The Middle Temple, The Inner Temple, and Lincoln's Inn. "The Habits of the sixteen Grand Masquers were all the same ; their persons most handsome and lovely ; the Equipage so full of state and height of gallantry, that it never was outdone by any representation mentioned in our former stories."

The streets of London, then so gloomy by night, were treated to a rare illumina-

tion as the procession moved on. "The torches and flaring huge flamboys, born by the side of each chariot, made it seem lightsome as at noonday, but more glittering, and gave a full clear light to all the streets and windows as they passed by. The march was slow in regard to their great number, but more interrupted by the multitude of the spectators in the streets besides the windows, and they all seemed loth to part with so glorious a spectacle."

In the meantime the Banqueting House was filled with the gay Lords and Ladies of the Court, and so great was the crowd, that for a time the King and Queen could not find room to enter. Charles stood at a window looking at the procession as it came down the street, and so pleased was he at the gallant spectacle, that he bade the Masquers take a turn round the tilt-yard, so that he might have an extra sight of it. Poor King! his experience of Whitehall windows was destined to be a varied one. Then the procession entered; and all the "Dances, figures, properties, voices, Instruments, Songs, Airs, Composures, were all of them exact. The words and actions were all of them exact; and none failed in their parts of them, and the scenes were most curious and costly."

"The Queen and the Ladies of the Court were evidently bent on an evening's enjoyment. They danced freely and graciously with such of the Masquers as were bold enough to lead them out, the Queen declaring that they were as good dancers as she ever saw." It is good to know that the sports came to an end before midnight; and still better, to be assured that the Masquers and Inns of Court gentlemen were brought to a stately banquet, and after that was dispersed, every one departed to his own quarters.

Then comes a bit of moralising from honest Whitelocke, which may have been prompted by "the morning after" sensations:

"Thus was this earthly pomp and glory, if not vanity, soon past over and gone, as if it had never been."

So pleased was the Queen with the diversion of the evening, that she expressed a wish to see it again. Thereupon the Lord Mayor of London, acting no doubt on a hint from the Court, invited the King and Queen to witness it once more in Merchant Taylors' Hall; and sumptuously entertained both the Royal party and the Masquers themselves.

This display of civic generosity gave great pleasure to the King and Queen, and to the citizens likewise; especially, as Whitelocke puts it, "to those of the younger sort and of the Female sex."

As patrons of music, the Benchers seem to have opened their purses liberally, some of the musicians being paid one hundred pounds apiece; and a thousand pounds altogether was spent over the musical part of the Masque. The whole cost of the entertainment was over twenty thousand pounds.

A few days after, the committee attended at the Palace to convey the thanks of the donors of the feast to the King and Queen for their gracious acceptance of it. Their Majesties protested that thanks were due from them for the noble and sumptuous entertainment which the Inns of Court had given them; many pretty speeches were made; and then Whitelocke, again dropping into moral reflections, says his last word of the Masque:

"Thus, these dreams past and these Pomps vanished, it will be now time to return to the publick story of the latter part of this year."

And this public story was rapidly taking to itself the likeness of the tragedy that was to come. If the day of the Masque was verily a happy one for Charles the First, it must have been one of the last he ever spent. This brilliant pageant flashes out like the last rays of sunset across an evening sky lurid with thunder-clouds.

The web, which his evil counsellors had been weaving, was fast closing around him. Almost the next day Laud caused a sharp sentence to be passed in the Star Chamber against Prynne for his libel. He was to be imprisoned for life, fined five thousand pounds, expelled Lincoln's Inn, disabled from practice, degraded from his University degree, set in the pillory, his ears to be cut off, and his book to be burnt by the hangman; which sentence was fully carried out.

The words "ship money" were heard pretty constantly, with ominous murmurs thereanent. Mr. Attorney Noy, whom we have seen recently leading the Masque on behalf of Lincoln's Inn, is known to history less as a masquer than as the inventor of that ill-starred impost. We may well wonder whether he speculated as to the far-reaching consequences of his financial experiment, while he was dancing in velvet and spangles.

Fortunately for himself, he did not live to see its fruits. Early in 1634, we read :

"Mr. Attorney Noy, having set on foot the tax of ship money, leaveth it and the world."

And this is the last record of him in the "Memorials" of the gossip politician, of whose folio such free use has been made in this account of how the lawyers enjoyed themselves two hundred and fifty years ago.

"TIRED OUT."

"JUST tired out," the neighbour said,
Turning from the squalid bed,
Where the weary woman lay,
Panting life's last hours away.
Save that sound of sobbing breath,
All was still as coming Death ;
For the frightened children cowered
Where, with heavy brows that lowered,
'Neath the long-enduring strain,
The mute husband bore his pain.

Just tired out—far down below
Waves were fretting on the flow ;
And the full, recurrent roar
Echoed upward from the shore ;
Fainter grew the pulses' beat,
As the worn hands plucked the sheet,
And the death-damps gathered, where
Ruffled all the tangled hair.
Said the watcher at her side,
"She is waiting for the tide."

When the waves had ebbed anew,
The tired life was over too ;
Gone from want, and care, and ill,
Very peacefully and still,
After all she bore and wept,
Hard-worked wife and mother slept ;
Very fair she looked, and meek,
Long dark lashes swept her cheek,
Worn hands crossed upon her breast,
For the "weary was at rest."

"IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE."

THE above-written maxim is, or has been at one time or other, a hard saying to every man that breathes. Where is he or she who cannot recall some moment in the long past days of early childhood when a parent or guardian, with solemn voice and appropriate moralising, has counselled, or more likely commanded, the division of a dearly-prized cake or orange with a younger sister or a poor little boy who didn't get such good things every day? Who can ever forget the blank desolation which fell upon the spirit; the blotting out of all joy from the world around, when it was fully realised that the masticating and sucking joys must be curtailed just one half? Had an angel

spoken from heaven, he could hardly have brought conviction that the donor was in better case than the receiver.

Nor are things much altered when the next of the seven ages is reached. The hardbake and the marbles of the lower walks of society, and the Turkish delight and silkworms of respectability, exercise a charm well-nigh as potent over the affections of boyhood. But, by the time the second lustrum has closed, a lesson has most probably been imbibed—the lesson of "quid pro quo"; of the process of setting a sprat to catch a mackerel; or, to use the language of high policy, of the "do ut des" philosophy; and Billy Wilkins will unfold his parcel of confectionery, wrapped in a bit of newspaper and stored in his trousers pockets, for the benefit of Jack Hawker, who always has sixpence to spend on a Monday morning. Just the same as at Courcy College, Master Adolphus Simpson will never fail to include, in his distribution of the good things from home, Tom Grubbins, whose hampers are by common consent the best sent to the school.

And so the story runs through at least six of the seven ages of man. There is plenty of giving going on all the time; but it is, for the most part, giving which bears a strong resemblance to the cynic's definition of gratitude. From twenty to four-score men give that they may get. The lover, the soldier, the justice, the man going down the hill of life, all have their objects of desire, and never entirely lose sight of them in their particular acts of beneficence.

Then we come to the seventh. For this, alas! earth holds no gift worth striving or planning after; both will and power of acquisition are gone. The last best gift comes to all, unbought; so the greybeard sits untempted in his fire-side arm-chair, with his breeches pocket tight buttoned.

This is undoubtedly the cynic's view—the utterance of a hard man with a conscience born of fear, of personal discomfort, and of the police magistrate; but even such a one as this would give poor humanity credit for certain lonely exceptions; for men and women who give their money, and, what is ten times more precious, their time and care with no other possible reward in view than the hope of evil lessened and good increased; and often how vain the hope! With these we have little to do. These are the salt of the earth, and the vast majority of givers assuredly are not; givers who certainly do

not bless by their gifts; givers who haul up a sumpence to get rid of some persistent vagabond who follows them from the club door; or who send their little cheque to some pauperising soup kitchen or clothing club, employing canvassers loud of voice and brazen of front. There is, in short, giving beneficent, and giving noxious. The first sort is so rare that nobody would even have thought it worth while to frame a maxim about it. I fear, therefore, that the giving lauded in the maxim must belong to the second division.

The causes of unbeneficent giving seem to be mainly these: kindly unreflecting impulse, the Anathema Maranatha of the Charity Organisation Society; the love of notoriety; and indolence, which in this instance takes the form of inability to say "No."

The first two are such well-worn themes in the hands of the economist and the satirist, that I will let them pass. Who has not heard of the plutocrat who readily gives his thousand, about which everybody will read in next morning's "Times," and turns a deaf ear and a blind eye to the crossing sweeper? We will let him go; simply remarking that he and his kindly fellow offender still flourish in our midst unregenerate, in spite of the castigation and counselling of satirists and political economists.

The other sort, the "good kind of man," as the phrase goes, is generally quite devoid of all desire for notoriety. It gives him no pleasure to see his name in subscription lists full of august personages. His strongest wish is to be let alone; quiet to him is a priceless treasure; and, when once this secret gets abroad, the black-mailers of society, and especially those of his own family, make preparations for a campaign. Who is he, they ask, that he should be free from the tax which good easy men in broadcloth, and fat wethers with no armour but their wool, have had to pay to the lean villain in coat of mail and the hungry wolf in all ages? Shall they go away empty-handed, letting him draw his dividends and spend them all on himself, while they know full well that, by dropping in to have a chat with him, and introducing timely allusions to an expected visit from the broker's man, they may safely calculate on taking their leave the richer by a little cheque?

This was not the habit of the German Baron in his Castle of Hohenfels, when he saw a long train of laden pack-horses, and

the fat merchants who owned them, coming up the narrow valley below his eyrie. The chieftains on the Scottish Border would have kept cold houses if they had suffered all the bees bound for the South to pass untaxed; and our modern black-mailer, why should he look coldly upon the good old usages of the Middle Ages, and descend to earn his living by humdrum work, if he should happen to find himself in possession of the best modern equivalent to the robber Baron's castle—to wit, some claim by kinship, or marriage, or simple friendship, upon some good easy man with a surplus of income, a love of being left alone, and an inability to say "No!"

I might search the world in vain for a better example of this type than the one furnished by my late Uncle Joseph. He was one of a family of seven brothers, and of these five married and had large families. My Uncle Joseph and my Uncle Frederic, his youngest brother, remained single all their lives; and I shall not be far wrong in saying that all the softness of heart allotted to the family was monopolised by the first-named. Mr. Frederic was, as the proverb went, as "hard as nails," and he left a handsome fortune behind him in consequence for his nephews and nieces to squabble over for the rest of their lives. Mr. John, Mr. George, Mr. William, Mr. Charles, and Mr. Antony, were all, as I have before remarked, the fathers of numerous progeny, and any tendency towards giving, which may have been latent in their several natures, was effectually checked in its growth by nursery expenses and school bills.

My grandfather's family all settled and went into business at no great distance from the paternal nest; and there, on the old gentleman's death, I went to live with my father, his eldest son, the Mr. John above-mentioned. I was the only son, but I had seven sisters; and, as time went on, one of them was nearly always living with Uncle Joseph. These visits, no doubt, helped them to get husbands; but they were fine, well-grown girls, and might easily have taken any young fellow's fancy, without the super-added charm of a probable handsome wedding gift from their uncle. Mr. George and Mr. William were farmers; Mr. Charles was a lawyer; and Mr. Antony was a medical practitioner. These were all shrewd, industrious men, and did fairly well in their several callings. My Uncle

Joseph farmed also, but he was, besides, a brickmaker; and it was always a puzzle to me why he, who certainly was the worst man of business in the family, should have undertaken two callings when one would certainly have taxed all his abilities to the utmost. But there was yet another puzzle. My Uncle Joseph, though he farmed and made bricks on principles which would infallibly have sent any one else into the "Gazette," managed to keep his head above water, and saved money as well; but his savings must have gathered themselves together much more sparingly when that fine generation of nephews and nieces which belonged to him began to set up for themselves. In sowing time he would leisurely set to work when every one else had finished; more often than not, one of his neighbours would borrow his drilling machine at the busiest season of the year, so he had perforce to wait. Uncle Joseph could not say "No." Perhaps the borrower had a large family, or was backward with his rent, or spent so much money at the public house, that he could not afford to buy a machine of his own; but, in spite of the delay, the quickening shower always seemed to come at the right time; and when harvest came Uncle Joseph's crops made as good a show as his neighbours'.

Then, when the season of ingathering was at hand, he would always be well to the rear; and there was little chance that he would ever make up leeway with the set of harvestmen he usually employed; for if there was a weak-backed man, or a short-legged man, or a man with chronic asthma, anywhere in the district, he would invariably elect to join Uncle Joseph's company. By the magic of patience, however, Uncle Joseph generally managed to harvest his corn in fair order; and if a wet September should catch him and make his wheat sprout, and discolour his barley, he would take his misfortune with a light heart, and declare that if it were not for the damaged corn, he would have had to buy meal for his fat pigs. My uncle was innocent of French, otherwise I should have fancied that he had borrowed his philosophy from the excellent Pangloss.

With his supplementary industry of brickmaking, it was just the same. He sold many bricks in the course of the year; but I doubt whether he was paid for half of them. There was a story current about a certain man, who built a row of cottages—with Uncle Joseph's bricks, of course—right in front of Uncle Joseph's windows.

In course of time, the cottages and their occupants became a pest, and the destroyers of Uncle Joseph's quiet; so he was compelled perforce to buy them. His brick bill had never been paid; the statute of limitation had voided it; the vendor was not a man of sentiment; so Uncle Joseph had to buy his own bricks at a rasing price. I have thrown in these instances by way of showing Uncle Joseph's practice in the matter of indirect giving. It was not one with which a man could grow rich; but it was thrift itself, compared with the direct process—the simple interchange of a cheque bearing Uncle Joseph's signature, and a note of hand signed by one or other of his nephews or of his nieces' husbands.

How it fell out that my uncles, steady, industrious men as they were, should bring into the world such a set of spendthrift sons and foolish daughters as they did, has always been to me an unsolved mystery. I may here add, that I myself have always passed as a respectable man; and at the present moment, owe no one anything, and that my sisters are good creatures enough; though some of my brothers-in-law—but if I go off into my own more immediate family chronicles, I shall have neither time nor space to give to my Uncle Joseph and his monetary transactions.

My uncle was my godfather, and I was, so my good mother always declared, his favourite nephew. This I can quite well believe. It is hard to fancy that the ladies and gentlemen whom he bade stand and deliver, could have had any particular liking for Mr. Richard Turpin; or that the fat German chapmen remembered the Baron von Falkenstein in their prayers, after they had escaped with lightened bales out of his clutches. So, in like manner, my good uncle could not feel any violent affection for Jack Rodman, the husband of my Uncle Charles's eldest daughter, who had, on an average, an execution in his house once a year, an execution which had had always to be bought out with Uncle Joseph's money; or for my Cousin Robert, who never got back from Martlebury market the same day as he went, and never missed a race meeting at Newmarket.

The whole of the rest were of the same kidney, some better, some worse; and I am sure that Uncle Joseph, whenever he heard the sound of horses' feet in the stable-yard outside, and saw that it was

I, must have heaved a sigh of relief; for I never went on a borrowing errand, or for what I could get.

Stay! I do remember that in my schoolboy days I was extra attentive to the old gentleman in the time of strawberries, for never before or since have I ever tasted such fruit as that which grew on Uncle Joseph's beds.

So I, the favourite, the inoffensive sheep, got my fill of strawberries, which would have rotted had I not eaten them; while the rest, the sharp-beaked, crooked-claw kites, flew away with the gold and the silver, as they always do all the world over. The Germans have an excellent saying: "The angry dog always gets the biggest bone"—and who does not know Thackeray's story of Captain Shindy, who monopolised the services of the entire staff of club servants, whenever he entered the coffee-room, simply because he swore at them like a trooper?

Well, at any rate, my Uncle Joseph was always genuinely pleased to see me, and I am sure that could not have been said of any other of his younger male relations.

Uncle Joseph made a will once, and, had he been a man of active temperament and a strong sense of justice, he would have made codicils innumerable to redress the balance disturbed by these constant ante-mortem donations; but his love of letting things lie overbore his desire to divide his possessions with mathematical exactness; so the blood-suckers got their share equally with myself—not that it did them any good.

Jack Rodman is now a billiard marker, or worse, at an inn at Martlebury; and my Cousin Robert is a Newmarket tout. With every one of my married uncles there is living either a bankrupt, drink-sodden son, or a widowed, penniless daughter, or a family of deserted and orphaned grandchildren.

There seems to be a curse springing from my Uncle Joseph's money, or, at least, from so much of it as was bestowed on those irregular, black-mailing loans above-mentioned.

Those moralists, who are disposed to peer deeply into the causes of things, may very likely exclaim that the fount and origin of all the mischief I have been describing, is to be found in Uncle Joseph himself.

To them, he will appear as a sort of upas-tree, benumbing and demoralising

his victims by the cheques so easily shaken from his outstretched hands; a pauperising institution, as noxious to their principles as is a gratuitous soup-kitchen to the Charity Organisation Society; and I am inclined to think they will not be far wide of the mark.

Between my father and Uncle Joseph there was a quarrel of old standing, and they saw as little of one another as possible. To this quarrel I ascribe my own preservation. In spite of the coolness between the houses, I went pretty often to see him; but there had never grown up in our home a tradition that when a little extra cash was wanted, Uncle Joseph was the banker to go to.

My father was a proud, cold man; one who managed to pull through without borrowing; but, had he required a loan, I am sure he would have gone anywhere rather than to his own family.

At my Uncle George's or at my Uncle William's it was quite different. The first killed leveret or brace of partridges, the earliest spring chickens, were always destined for Uncle Joseph; and, as surely as Monday follows Sunday, the receipt of a toothsome bit for Uncle Joseph's table would be followed by an application for pecuniary help. Johnny had overrated his means when he went to Wiffen Farm, and would be glad of a couple of hundred just to stock his place as it should be stocked; or, Frank's expenses, since he had been walking the hospitals, were a cruel pull upon Uncle Antony's purse.

Thus the youngsters all learned early the existence of this supplementary spring. They learned also that, after a little badgering, they would get what they wanted; so they cultivated the art of badgering rather than the particular calling by which their parents had decided that they should earn their bread.

To use a negative expression, Uncle Joseph's donation resembled Portia's definition of mercy as little as possible, for it blessed neither him that gave nor him that received. His story and that of my luckless cousins seems to prove the truth of a maxim I was at one time about to attempt to discredit, namely, that "any man can make money, but it takes a clever man to spend it." Money that comes lightly generally goes lightly, and works undreamt of mischief in transit. I believe that a shilling gained by labour is as good as a pound gratis to most men—and to most communities likewise.

From the pages of history the fate of certain nations may be cited in support of the assertion above-named, and perhaps it might be well if Englishmen nowadays meditated a little over the decline and fall of Spanish grandeur which, as every schoolboy knows, was induced by the shiploads of gold which the Spaniards picked up in the New World and brought over here to spend. Unhappily the most fashionable diversion at that time was found in attempting to make all men think alike on a subject which no one could define or explain, and this was the way the Spanish money went. It came so lightly, and "surely there is plenty more to be had from the same source and by the same means," the wise men said; but when the New World had been swept twice and thrice it was found that there was no more gold to be got abroad; and at home land rats and water rats were gnawing at and burrowing under the foundations of the State.

Thus when the Don with empty pockets began to cast about for a new method to fill them, he found himself nowhere. With his brain muddled by brutal excesses, and his fingers stiffened by holding the sword and spear, he was no match for the keen-witted, dogged English and Flemings, and the nimble French: so he fell out of the race.

During a certain portion of the present century, the central point of which may be struck in the year 1870, the men of business in England made money almost as easily and as rapidly as the Spanish adventurers of the sixteenth. It may appear to some grotesque, and even unseemly, that I should in any way liken Mr. Dibbs, of Manchester, or Mr. Drills, of Birmingham, to the ruffianly crew who followed Pizarro or Cortes across the Atlantic; because both sets of operators picked up gold and silver with remarkable celerity; but that there are certain grounds of comparison is affirmed by many writers, and by none more positively than Mr. Ruskin. "In comparing the modern acquisitive power of capital with that of the lance and sword, the only difference is, that the levy of black-mail in old time was by force, and is now by cozening. The old rider and reiver frankly quartered himself on the publican for the night; the modern one merely makes his lance into an iron spike and persuades his host to buy it. One comes as an open robber, the other as a cheating pedlar."

This is no doubt a somewhat strained analogy; but the fact remains unchanged, that at two different periods of the world's history, fortune has thrown wealth broadcast into the lap of Spain, and into the lap of England. We have seen what was the outcome in the case of Spain. Our statesmen and our traders have here an example and a warning; may they pay heed to it! Of course, it may be only a whim of my own; but I cannot help fearing, that in all cases, money got easily is apt to bring disaster with it. I fear that the "huge wealth," piled up with so little effort in the golden decade of our prosperity, may be of no more solid profit to us than the wealth ravished from the palaces of dusky Kings, and the shrines of mysterious gods was to the conquering Spaniards; or, to use a more familiar illustration, that it may be to us as noxious as was any one of Uncle Joseph's benefactions to his nephews or nieces.

IN A PYRENEAN VALLEY.

PEOPLE are — like sheep — gregarious animals, following in a beaten track, one after the other, in blind stupidity, afraid to leap over the wall of conventional habit and strike out fresh and untrodden paths for themselves.

And nowhere is this characteristic more apparent than in the way they spend their annual holiday. They must do as their neighbour does, go where he goes, take their holiday exactly the same month, no matter that their doing so involves discomfort, overcrowding, and expense. How much more enjoyably would the autumn be spent; how doubly delightful, did they leave the hackneyed highway of Scarborough and Homburg, of the English Lakes or Chamounix, and ramble in leafy untrodden by-paths till they hit upon some spot full of new and undiscovered beauty!

The rapturous delight of a successful explorer would be theirs, as well as the proud feeling of proprietorship in a place unshared by the "vulgar throng." There are in England, and on the Continent, a hundred nooks waiting to be found out; if they only knew their fate they would tremble, in case the wandering tourist who first lights upon their modest charms, may be but the prelude to a vast array of masons and decorative builders, who will cover the fair hill-sides with glaring stucco

villas, will make artificial waterfalls in their fern-clad dells, and erect hideous hoardings where only Nature's fairy fingers have hitherto touched the barren rocks.

The memory of just such a lovely, sequestered valley comes to me like the sweet scent of a forgotten flower, as I write, bringing before me a vivid picture of brilliant, unclouded weather; of a happy, laughing group of young creatures basking in the summer sun; of an ever-changing picture of light and shadow, mountain and gorge, rock and tree—a very Paradise on earth. We saw the little village first on an early spring day, when the snow still covered the high Pyrenean range and no fresh green clad the vales; and yet, in its winter sleep it held such a marvellous possibility of beauty that we at once fixed on it as our summer abode that year. Its quaintness, its solitude, its grandeur, its simplicity, drew us with almost magnetic attraction; and the promise it held out was amply fulfilled.

Who that has travelled in the interior of France, in its mountainous parts, does not know such a place?

A grey old village, flanked by a church, beautiful in nothing but its age and sacred use; on the outskirts an ancient château, half tower, half cottage; a straggling little town, with no population to speak of, boasting, however, of its "Maire," or "Préfet"; a great square, with a cross surmounting a fountain in the centre, around which is the constant clatter of sabots, when the women, with the graceful earthenware "cruche" on their heads, gossip while drawing the water; three or four cabarets, or "café estaminets," scattered in the one long, roughly-paved street; barracks, of course, with some soldiers of exceedingly small stature in hideous blue great-coats with scarlet epaulettes, and a smart lieutenant with a small waist and enormous waxed moustache, lounging about—the only sign of life about the lazy sleepy place, which, with its inhabitants, seems to be basking in the rays of the hot sun which floods the valley.

High up on the hill-side nestles a convent, whence you can hear the tinkling bell summoning the nuns to their prayers.

Once a week the village wakes to something like life on the market-day, when peasant-women in their long cloaks and vivid scarlet hoods ride in on stout mules from tiny hamlets high up in the mountains, to sell their farm produce and

lay in stores for their own households. The men scarcely awake from their habitual lethargy; they lounge round café doors, smoking, or sit everlastingly playing dominoes, while they drink down "litre" after "litre" of the cheapest and sourest of wines. Their wives transact all the business, with their sharp voices cutting through the air and puzzling us what to make of their strange Basque language.

We would sit for hours at a window giving on the "Place," now studying the lively and amusing scene before us, now reading or working, when all at once we would be startled by a voice at our elbow, and a dark, handsome face would be thrust through the "jalousies," and in musical Spanish accents a voice would entreat the *Señoritas* to buy a stiletto or a Spanish cloak.

What an air of dignity and indolence these strolling Spanish pedlars had! What dark, wicked, soft, fiery eyes! What impudent, enticing tongues! With what grace they threw their brilliant-striped heavy mantles round their strong, straight figures! How well their tight green velvet jackets, scarlet sashes, and bright hose became them! We did not wish any of their wares; but the amount of cloaks and stilettos, and bright-coloured garters with mystic words wrought in on them in tinsel thread, which we now possess, speaks very badly for our powers of resolution, or very highly of their powers of persuasion. We would saunter out through the crowd and buy butter and eggs and fruits, delicious cool curd, a sort of cream cheese done up daintily in green rush coverings, and a cold porridge, or pudding, made of Indian maize, which, when fried, we found very palatable. We would venture on a few words of "patois," and everywhere there was a bright smile of welcome for "les étrangers," who were thought extraordinary beings indeed to live up in this lonely valley with no society and no amusement, as they understood the latter, within reach. They discussed our personal appearance as we passed with a frankness which we might not have appreciated had we fully comprehended all their speech. I did make out what one woman meant, as she said to her husband as I passed "*Gran pi*" ("*Grands pieds*"), and thought it wise not to require further translation of their remarks.

The village boasted but of one shop, where butter, candles, nails, sugar, horse-shoes, preserves, ink, and a large jar containing leeches were ranged in the window with a delightful disregard to order.

A large party in ourselves, we found sufficient society and amusement in the company of some English friends who had taken the château at the east end of the village. We saw each other every day, planning excursions, and dining at each other's houses once or twice a week.

There being no Protestant service in the village, we were in the habit of meeting on alternate Sundays in our house or in that of our friends located in Chateau Moise, where I generally acted as curate, reading the church service on Sunday, for the benefit of those who were Episcopalians, losing my place frightfully in the performance; and the next Sunday using a book of compiled prayers, and a long sermon for the behoof of the Presbyterian portion of my congregation.

The recollection of one Sunday in particular always brings a smile to my lips whenever it flashes across me. The proprietress of the Château Moise, and in fact of most of the land around the village, was a Madame Lafosse, a Scotch woman by birth, who had married a Frenchman long since dead, and who let her large house to strangers in summer, she herself retiring to a small cottage in the garden. This summer, however, she had gone to try the efficacy of some baths, buried in a wild and remote recess of the mountains, which she had heard were of great benefit in rheumatic diseases. A dismal account of her loneliness, with no companion but a few gouty peasants, the sole frequenters of a once probably renowned watering place, having reached us, the happy thought occurred to one of our party late one Saturday evening that it would be an act of Christian charity to share our next day's service with our benighted friend, and go in a body to hold our conventicle at the Baths of B——, some eleven miles distant.

The suggestion met with universal satisfaction, not to say with delight, as a novel sensation of any kind was sure to be in our sequestered valley; and the very fact of its being a picnic, as it certainly was neither more nor less, though none of us ventured to call it such in broad terms, added a sort of piquant zest, as forbidden pleasures generally do.

Our talk implied that we were sacrificing

the rest proper to the day and most congenial to our feelings, solely for the sake of our old friend; and we set about making our preparations in a rather misplaced but pleasant spirit of sacrificial duty. We were to take cold vianda, fruit, wine, and—the Book of Sermons; and carriages were ordered to convey our party of nine or ten.

It was a glorious day. The sun, which poured on us, would have been overpowering had it not been for the welcome breeze blowing off the snow mountains on our right; and as each turn of the road displayed a scene of more matchless beauty than its predecessor, I think we might have been worse employed than studying with thankful enjoyment the wondrous loveliness of Nature.

Great pine-forests, through which the wind now wailed like a lost spirit, now clanged like an organ in an old cathedral aisle, rose a green and serried wall before us.

Now the road wound through a valley fertile and smiling. Here and there glowed a little patch of Indian corn; peasants in their huge sabots and red jackets, and women with gay kerchiefs tied over their long plaited hair gave a touch of vivid life and colouring to the scene; far up the lonely hills we heard the sheep-bells tinkling; every here and there, down the precipitous mountain clefts, poured silver streamlets flickering in the sun; now a vast chasm in the rock, the ground around strewn with huge boulders and stems of trees, showed where a mountain torrent had descended, bearing all before its devastating power; and, over and above all, like the godlike presence it was, shone and glittered the magnificent Pic du Midi.

It was a rough and stony road, but exquisite with a thousand indescribable lovelinesses, which are swept away from the regular tourist's track, as needless and interfering with a traffic which pays. Here we would come suddenly on a broken bridge, with ivy trailing from its parapet and dipping lovingly in the cool murmur of a stream below; there our driver would dismount and, with many terrible oaths, drag his unwilling steeds through a ford; and so, with many an incident scarce worth recording, but adding to the sum and substance of our day's enjoyment, we reached at last our destination, and, in the unfeigned and demonstrative delight of our old friend, we felt repaid for the kind exertion we had made in coming so far.

"We came to hold our service with you," said one of the elders of the party, whose Scotch prejudices were not yet thoroughly subjugated by the aspect of affairs, and whose conscience hardly lent itself to our transparent deception.

"And we are going to pic—, at least we have brought our lunch with us," cried a more practical juvenile.

"And Minette must boil lots of chestnuts while we read the sermon;" chestnuts in these parts being the universal food of both peasants and pigs.

Hot and dusty with our long drive, we found the pleasant shade of the low-roofed, dark, tumble-down old room most agreeable after the burning rays of the sun to which we had been exposed for two hours, and we were glad to rest awhile and engage in desultory conversation. But we could not too long neglect the business of the day; so, arranging ourselves decorously, I took up the volume, and, much after the manner of the Puritans, allowing the book to fall open anywhere, selected my sermon.

I had just warmed to my subject, and hoped that I was drawing the attention of my restless congregation, when a sabot sounding along the wooden lobby and a knock at the door announced the first interruption.

"Pardon, M'sieu et Mesdames," squeaked the shrill voice of Minette, as she entered and deposited the bread on the table.

Being rather deaf and blind, she was not aware of our occupation, and all the time she remained in the room arranging the table, she kept up a running commentary on the baths, the weather which the "bon Dieu" had given us, etc.

The door shut, I resumed my reading, but before three sentences had passed my lips, the sabots were at the door again, and "pardon, M'sieu et Mesdames, mais j'ai oublié le sel." Now it was a knife, now the chestnuts, now a plate, each new arrival preceded by the sabot-clattering, the knock, the "pardon, M'sieu et Mesdames," and the general tittering of the younger community.

"It is no use," we cried with universal acclamation; "we had better have our lunch first, and then see if Minette can be suppressed afterwards."

After paying due attention to our repast we went in a body round the wretched-looking, deserted Établissement, and I mentally thought I would live and die in the suffering of any kind of rheumatism rather than enter one of the baths we saw.

A damp earthen floor into which were sunk dark stone baths, begrimed with the dirt of many years, a brown deposit of filthy ooze in the bottom, in which "slimy things did crawl with legs upon a slimy sea." The very remembrance of the place makes me shudder; but Madame Lafosse, whose long residence abroad had accustomed her to many sights shocking to a person fresh from England, limped contentedly about, showing off the various places with an air more of proud proprietorship than otherwise, and declaring herself the better for the treatment afforded.

It was a magnificent evening when we prepared for our homeward drive. The great yellow moon was climbing over the pine tops, silvering the fine edges of the massive green branches which looked black in the coming night; a vast silence took the valley, vaster for the indescribable rustling sounds of distant wood and water which faintly reached the ear—"the many mingled sounds of earth which men call silence." Coming after the heat and weariness of the long tropical day, the night clasped us in a cool, quiet, soothing embrace, and part of us meditated, part slept, on the way home.

Perhaps we had not quite fulfilled the pious intentions of the morning, but at any rate these intentions had been of the best, even had they borne no fruit; we had all had a pleasant day, and got back to A— safe and sound; except one star-gazing young couple, who occupied a pony-carriage and who, admiring the moon, or repeating poetry, or something equally ethereal, brought themselves and their ponies rather suddenly to the earth. Enjoining mutual secrecy as to the affair, the gentleman carefully washed all marks from the broken knees of the steed, and accounted to us for their late arrival by rather overdone raptures on the exceeding loveliness of the night, and a détour they had made by the way; but the owner of the horse was not so easily deceived, for he arrived next morning while we were at breakfast, and demanded seventy-five francs for damage done.

A lively scene ensued, made up of many spluttering sentences on one side and much furious gesture on the other, lasting nearly an hour, at the end of which time he went away smiling and content with—fifteen!

I think it was here also that a young man of our party, fired with an ambition to go izard-hunting,* invested largely in

* The izard is a species of chamois.

sporting attire and ammunition, engaged a guide, and disappeared for three days; at the end of which time, he returned with, however, no trophy of success, and obliged reluctantly to confess he had never come across even the track of an animal.

However, he was observed to occupy the four or five subsequent days in much scribbling and deep thought. Being closely questioned, he, with all the presumptuous vanity of youth, informed us he had sent off a paper, called "Izard Hunting in the Pyrenees," to a popular magazine in London.

The boundless impertinence of the act deprived us for some moments of the powers of speech. When we asked on what experience of the nature or habits of the animal he founded his paper, he quietly replied:

"I once tasted one at the table d'hôte."

But the veracity of his statements was not called in question, as the article never saw the light.

The delicious air, primitive life, and exquisite scenery, together with the buoyant spirits of childhood, made us in love with the hidden nook, and caused us to overlook many discomforts which, now, perhaps, we might feel more heavily.

Alas! now a railway runs through the midst of our beloved village. The "British tourist" has found it out, and appropriated it for his own; the dear, old, simple peasants have so easily learned the lesson of cheating, that I fear the primary elements were in them before; great hotels have sprung up, like ugly mushrooms, all over the place; Government roads wind over the mountains; the fruit we used to buy for three sous a basket is of such a price that one thinks twice before becoming a purchaser; the horse-jobber would claim to-day his seventy-five francs, and I doubt not, get it too; a regular curate, provided by the Colonial Society, is there, taking my self-imposed duty.

Are we selfish in grudging that others should share in the pleasure we kept to ourselves so long and so keenly enjoyed? Does it in reality spoil a lovely spot to have it made a place of world-wide fame where crowds resort, many of them soulless beings, who only go because everyone else goes, or because it happens to be in the route to some more fashionable place?

It is a question hard to answer, and to which each must reply for himself.

I have not seen it in its later guise, nor do I wish to do so. I should not admire the altered face of the sweet sequestered spot I loved so long ago.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "*The Chilcotes*," etc.

CHAPTER XIX.

JESSIE had not been prepared for the visit, though she knew, of course, of the lately discovered relations, and had, indeed, done her best to damp the satisfaction which John had honestly expressed in the new tie by those dark prophecies of evil in which some natures revel.

It was all very well for John to talk; if he was foolish enough to be uplifted by their notice, he would soon discover his mistake. What advantage could he urge on their side? It did not need a Charles Lamb to point out the inconvenience of poor relations to rich ones.

"They never made me feel my inferiority," said John, with a touch of indignation.

"Oh, I dare say they tolerate you," said Jessie, as if she were making a concession to his weakness. "Wait till they get into society, and you will see."

People, like Jessie, who pride themselves on a knowledge of human nature, generally content themselves with analysing its baser propensities. John, on the other hand, had no stomach for this kind of dirty work, and believed all men to be excellent good fellows until they had given very satisfactory proof to the contrary. As for Tilly, he held her incapable of anything but the frankest kindness under any circumstances; but being a bit of a coward possibly, and a blunderer certainly, he had thought to allow her bright presence to burst without premeditation on Jessie, and thus to surprise her good will.

"Does Jessie know I'm coming?" Tilly asked, when she had safely descended from the omnibus and was threading her way at John's side through the maze of little streets, each so like the other, that it seemed a wonder that any householder should know his own.

"Well, no; that is—she looks for you, of course, but not on any particular day. But Jessie is a famous housekeeper," he assured her cheerfully, "and you can't very well take her amiss."

Tilly looked at him sideways with sly amusement. She knew a little more about Jessie than he imagined.

"Then I think I'll introduce myself," she said. "You might come in—do you think you could drop in casually—say in half-an-hour?"

"All right," he consented with suspicious alacrity. "Sure you don't mind?"

"What is there to mind?" she asked, looking at him with a hint of fun in her bright eyes. "Don't lose yourself, John, and go to the wrong house in search of me."

She waved him a good-bye, and went alone up the little flagged path to the door, where Sarah stood in open-mouthed amazement at so unwonted a spectacle as a visitor.

"I am Miss Temple's cousin," she said. "You needn't announce me. Just point out the sitting-room."

It was thus that Jessie, lifting her sombre, dark eyes at the opening of the door, saw before her a strange and unexpected vision. She, too, stared for a moment in speechless wonder; but the frown deepened on her brow at Tilly's smile.

"Cousin Jessie," said Tilly with simplicity, "may I come in? Please don't move, I will sit beside you if I may."

But Jessie had struggled into a sitting posture. It was one of her "bad days," as John would have said, with the large allowance good-natured people make for ill-natured ones; in truth, the chronic sore from which she suffered was suddenly quickened into new life at sight of Tilly's radiant health and beauty.

"Is it Miss Burton?" she asked ceremoniously. "If I had known that I was to have the honour of a visit, I'd have been better prepared. It is just like my brother not to let me know."

"What does it matter?" Tilly laughed out wholesomely. "It isn't Miss Burton, it is only Tilly. We are cousins. I never had a cousin before, to be sure, but I think if you had come to me at Lilliesmuir, I'd have been too glad to mind what I looked like, or to think of preparations."

"No doubt," said Jessie acidly, "but you can't be expected to enter into the feelings of poor relations."

"Jessie," said Tilly with sorrowful surprise, "do you think I came to—to show off?"

"Oh dear no!" said Jessie with sudden liveliness. "I dare say you have an even smarter gown than that one; it was con-

siderate of you not to wear your best. And you have left your carriage round the corner, no doubt, not to overwhelm us. I didn't hear the sound of the wheels, or I should have got up and put on my poor Sunday finery. You are looking round the room. I dare say it strikes you as extremely amusing to live in a little box like this."

"No, I am not," said Tilly bravely, "I am looking at you."

"Well," cried Jessie, with a deepened bitterness flashing in her eyes and vibrating in her tones, "perhaps if I were as beautiful and as healthy as you, I should take pleasure in the comparison too."

"I am thinking," said Tilly, passing by this taunt, "that you can't mean to wound me on purpose, and that it is more than likely that I've blundered, and come at the wrong time. I will go away now, and come another time when you are stronger."

"Oh, you needn't go," said Jessie, content, since she had proved her ability to sting, to summon up a grudging remnant of grace, "if you wait till I am stronger, you will never come back at all."

This admission softened the place in Tilly's heart that had been hardening towards Jessie, and she sat down.

"You may as well tell me about yourself," said Jessie, lying back and shutting her eyes. "I suppose we are cousins. I would never have sought you out; but, since you've come to me, it's different."

"Hasn't John told you about us?"

"John!" said John's sister, with a movement that expressed unplumbed depths of contempt.

"I know your cousin, too."

Jessie opened her eyes and fixed them on the girl beside her. There was a strange, eager scrutiny in them.

"You know Fred Temple? Well, what do you think of him?"

Tilly's smile was quite free from embarrassment.

"I'll tell you when I know him better."

"You expect to know him better? Well, I dare say he'll give you chances enough," she said with a bitter significance. "Tell me about yourself, and what you used to do before you became the social hope of the family. I dare say that bit of your life will be easier for me to understand."

It was at least easier for Tilly to talk about. As she dwelt upon the past, already growing so remote, already losing some definiteness of outline in

her memory, she forgot her first recoil from Jessie in her desire to make those passages of her earlier life live again before the listener. Tilly was always eloquent when she spoke of Lilliesmuir; she still called the village "home"; and Jessie, who heard her with suspended criticism, noted this now, and again opened her eyes to look at her cousin.

Was she acting a part; affecting to despise her present eminence, and to yearn for that lowlier lot? There was nothing in her look to confirm this suspicion. Her glance was absently fixed, seeing nothing nearer than four hundred miles off; her mobile mouth was half sad in its gentle curves.

She was still talking, and Jessie listening in a silence that, in spite of herself, was less hostile, when John returned.

He cast a hurried, embarrassed look at Tilly, bungling over his greeting, and displaying none of the flexibly assured surprise that Fred would have managed with ease to assume. He carried conscious guilt in every limb; in the very folds and lines of his coat. He was, in short, so inadequate an actor that he was detected at once.

Tilly, checked in the flow of her narrative, looked up bewildered, and then she laughed.

"Well, John," she said, "we needn't pretend any more; we are found out. Jessie is too clever for us. She knows at a glance, you see, that we came here together, and that you have been exploring Fulham for the last hour. I dare say she even knows that we came here on the outside of an omnibus."

"John never can keep anything from me," said John's sister, in a tone that was perhaps meant to convey a warning to his ear. "I found out all about you on the very first night he saw you."

"I rather think I told you," said he, recalling the incidents of that night vividly.

"Well," she said, "if it pleases you to think that!"

After this conversation languished, and was near dying under the caustic breath of Jessie's criticism; but at a suggestion of tea the culprits somewhat rallied their spirits. A cup of tea is a woman's resource at moments of difficulty, and the preparation of it in this instance furnished John with something to do other than to sit and look foolish.

Men may be roughly divided into the

handy and the helpless order; Tilly's experience had chiefly dealt with the latter. Whatever may have been Uncle Bob's habits in the days when his riches were not, from the moment of their acquisition he expected others to serve him; as for Cousin Spencer, tradition asserts that, left to himself, it was his practice to fill his cup from the water-jug, and pour the cream over the sugar, in happy unconsciousness of having blundered. Being used then to expend a half-motherly care on her mankind, Tilly watched John's movements with an amused wonder, as he obeyed Jessie's elaborate instructions. He looked so big and he made the room look so small, yet he managed deftly and with a smiling good-humour to follow the behests from the sofa, which changed with every fluctuation of the invalid's inconstant mood.

First, he must place the table at a certain angle; then it was too distant, now again it was too near; the cups were awry, the water cold, the bread too thickly cut. Tilly listened with a growing indignation which was quite as much levelled at the brother as the sister. She told herself that men of his patient fibre have much to answer for in making a capricious woman into a tyrant.

She was too young to make allowance for the justice that seeks to be tolerant even of intolerance, and she forgot that custom had somewhat deadened John's sensibilities, and that he did not feel Jessie's scorpion stings as she felt them. Thus it was that a little feeling that had in it, perhaps, a mere hint or savour of the disdain which Jessie so little troubled herself to conceal, had its birth within her. So the apparently harmless and blameless event of a visit to Fulham added another touch to the circumstances that were gradually shaping her life.

She went home alone in a hansom, declining John's escort with a promptitude that did not leave him a chance to plead.

"Can't you see when you're not wanted?" said Jessie, with the charming candour that near relations take pleasure in exercising towards each other. "You may just as well understand once for all, that Fulham and South Kensington aren't quite the same thing."

"Was that the reason why you refused my company?" he asked rather gravely, as he helped her into the cab.

"I don't think that question deserves an answer," said Tilly with some haughtiness.

"I should have thought I was insulting you if I had taken any notice of that insinuation."

"Well, I don't know," he said judicially. "I understand my uncle's attitude perfectly, and even so far sympathise with it. If he were alone, I don't suppose I'd have bothered him with a second visit, but there's you——"

"There's me," said Tilly, with an attempt to rally her gaiety. "Am I expected to define my attitude too? I think you must come and discover it for yourself."

"That's all I want," he said steadily. "I don't consider South Kensington so difficult to get at as poor Jessie does."

"Poor Jessie!" murmured Tilly under her breath. "John, John," she shook her head at him; "if it weren't so cold I would read you a lecture. You are too humble. You ought to assert yourself more. Don't you know there's such a thing as being too virtuous?"

"I think I can stop short of the dangerous point," he said with a laugh, as he bade her good-bye. She laughed too, but she went away in a mood of revolt; chiefly in discontent with the intractability of circumstance. Jessie was odious. Wasn't it hard, when one had only two cousins in the world, that one should be compelled to dislike one of them?

But Jessie's odiousness, and John's weakness in fostering it, were both alike forgotten in the final vexation that crowned the day when Uncle Bob refused to go with her to Mrs. Popham's.

It was the first of that series of entertainments which were to launch Tilly on the social tide, and it had some importance in her eyes as a step towards the realisation of those dreams that had beguiled the simple pair to London.

"Not going?" she said in her amazement, having hardly grasped the fact. "You are not ill?" She looked at him keenly. She was standing with her two hands clasping his wrists, her head thrown back. They had dined, and she recalled with some comfort that his appetite had shown an undiminished vigour.

"I'm not complaining," said he in characteristic reply.

"No, sir, it is I who am complaining," she said. "Do you really mean to let me go alone, among all those strange people? How do you suppose I'm going to talk to them, an unfortunate wif as I shall be?"

"Well, you needn't talk. You've only got to show up, and they'll see for them-

selves how pretty you are. I guess they won't mind if you keep quiet, so long as they can look at you."

She met this without a smile.

"You can't come over me with flattery," she said severely. "I thought you were quite reconciled to Mrs. Popham? I thought you even liked her?"

"She's well-meaning enough as far as I know," he said evasively; but Tilly was not to be put off.

"Why won't you go?" she asked. "I must hear the reason."

"Well, you see," he spoke uneasily, "if there was one reason, I would give it you quick enough; but there's dozens, and that takes time. And you've got your vandykes to think of, my lass."

She waved this excuse imperiously away.

"Well, tell the first of them," she said.

"It isn't that you're not wanted; Mrs. Popham is dying to see you. I have it on her own testimony"—a gleam of fun shot across her face. "It isn't that you haven't a dress-coat, or gloves, or a flower, even, if you want one; it isn't that you are ill—you are shamelessly well, sir; it isn't that you are too lazy to walk, because the carriage is coming at nine o'clock. What is it?"

When Tilly said, "What is it?" in that tone, and with those blue eyes of hers looking straight into his, Uncle Bob found himself abjectly pushed into a corner from which he had not the skill to deliver himself by any subterfuge.

"You'll do better without me," he said doggedly.

"It's for me to judge of that."

"No, it isn't," he said more firmly; "we didn't come here for nothing. I've got a pair of eyes in my head, and I can use them, though I can't argufy and chatter about nothing by the yard as some folks can; and I'll tell you what, my lass—I've noticed that a young woman takes her position from the people she's got most to do with—her father and mother, or it may be, her uncle——"

"I am proud to take my position from my uncle."

"Well, well, some day you will," he said with a hint of the old boastfulness. "There'll be a day, and that not very far off, when folks 'll come begging and scraping to know you and me, and it'll be for us to say whether we'll know them or not; but just now—mind you, I don't say they're better"—he spoke as if he dared

her to make this assertion—"they're a poor enough lot, as far as I can see, but they're different. They've their ways, and I've my ways, and we don't hit it off together."

"You are richer than any of them," she said, hoping to arouse his latent pride in his hard-earned wealth.

"But I'm not rich enough," he said shortly, and now at last she seemed to have got at the reason of his new behaviour. "Some of that aristocratic lot have got near as big a pile as I have, and they treat me as dirt because I made every halfpenny of mine myself." He drew away his hands from hers and thrust them out with a vehement gesture; the veins in his forehead were swelled with the suddenness of his passion. "And the poor ones that haven't onesixpence to rub against another—they're no better. 'It's brains that are a man's true wealth,' says that puppy that sits by you—much his brain has done for him—but you, my pretty—" He checked himself with a great effort, and his tone changed from huge scorn to an even womanly gentleness at sight of her frightened, distracted looks: "You're as good as the best of them; they'll find it hard to beat you; you'll hold your own, when I'm not by to make you ashamed."

"Have I ever said that?" She had grown very pale, and she spoke with a voice which shook with the strength of her feeling. "Have I ever shown by word or look, by so much as a sign that I—was ashamed of you? You daren't say it!" she challenged him, "for I never felt it. I never will feel it. I should hate and loathe myself if I did—I, who owe everything in the world to you! If you think that of me, I'd better go away. Oh, you don't think it!" she said piteously, and, as she read the grieved and surprised denial in his face, she went to him and burst out sobbing on his breast.

"Oh," she said, as she clung to him, "I wish we had never come here; I wish we had never left Liliesmuir."

"Nay, not I," he said gravely, though he held her fast; "it's a fight, my little lass, but we'll win through, never fear."

But she felt sadly unvaliant as she crept upstairs to dress. At first she had declared that she could not and would not go; that the world that dared to despise him should never have a chance of patronising her; but he soothed and persuaded her

with what skill he knew; and even her limited experience told her that she could not treat anything so solemn as a regularly-accepted engagement with frivolity.

"I'll go for to-night," she said, "but not again without you."

"We'll see, we'll see," he put her off with clumsy evasion.

"What excuse am I to make for you?" she asked, hoping that this difficulty might yet induce him to change his mind.

"You might say that I'm expecting a friend."

"But you are not expecting a friend."

"There's Behrens," he began. And then he said: "You're quick enough. You'll catch at the right thing."

"There's only one right thing, and that's the real reason."

"Well, then, give it them," he said, with a sort of rough enjoyment of the situation. "Tell them Bob Burton thinks he's not good enough yet to go among swells; they'll agree with me fast enough, you'll see."

But she knew that she could not say this; and in the end she went without knowing what she should say, and little guessing how easy it would be made for her to excuse him.

But his decision took the pleasure out of her toilet and the innocent triumph which she had expected from it. Honoria, who knelt on the floor, her neat bodices stabbed with pins, and patted, arranged, draped, found her for once unappreciative.

"Don't ever want to be rich," said Tilly with youthful, tragic gloom.

"Oh, I'd want it fast enough if that were all that was necessary," said Honoria. "You might as well say, 'don't ever want to be beautiful.' The one is about as likely a longing to be fulfilled as the other."

She peeped at her own image in the glass, and contrasted it discontentedly with the other face reflected there. "I must say it's rather mean of you to be both, Tilly."

But Tilly did not even notice the disguised compliment. Her thoughts were going out towards the new perplexities which seemed of a sudden to have sprung up in her path. Life that with the morning hours had seemed so easy was difficult after all; since the breaking of the day she had journeyed a long way towards despondency, and now it was nightfall within as well as without.

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No. 979. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

*By the Author of "Dams Durdan," "My Lord Concessit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.*

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I. "FORGIVEN!"

As she uttered his name, Adrian Lyle sprang to his feet, white as death and trembling as the weakest woman might have trembled. He was by her side; her hands were prisoned in his clasp; his eyes—Heaven knows what she might have seen in his eyes, as for one fleeting second the veil was lifted—and his soul spoke out to hers without warning or premeditation.

What she saw seemed to arrest all further speech. The change in herself had not struck home to her recovered consciousness with so great a sense of wonder as the change in him. All the pain and weariness; all the anxious hours; all those sleepless nights and hopeless days, had left marks indelible for all time; and he, who had borne the strain so long in its very hopelessness, now felt endurance snap like a frail thread beneath the pity of her glance and the innocent questionings of the childish lips.

She shuddered, and drew her hands from his with sudden, passionate force, and, covering her face from sight, cried brokenly to him once more to tell her what had happened.

"There is a dark, thick cloud," she moaned, "between me and all memory. I have been ill, have I not?—but before that there was something——"

Adrian Lyle turned aside. Not in any words could he tell what had happened; not by any power of will could he have

put that hateful story of shame and betrayal before her, as the terrible reality he knew it to be.

He beckoned to the pale and trembling woman who was looking on in silence and anguish—all mingled with a terrible and scarce-realised joy—at this scene.

"You tell her," he said in a low and broken whisper; "I cannot." And he went swiftly away from their presence—feeling that on the sacredness of such re-union he dared not look.

How long a time had passed, or how short? What passion of prayer and thanksgiving had left his lips? Dimly he knew he had groped his way to his own room and fallen on his knees without a cry or sound—the very force of emotion was too intense for outward expression.

But, at last, his brain seemed to clear; the stifling throbs of pulse and heart were less painful. He staggered to his feet and looked around him—a cold sweat upon his brow, his tall frame shaking like a leaf.

"Oh," he cried in his heart, "I did not think it would have been so hard, or that I was such a coward. I have not got over it; it is no whit easier than it was when—when I left her roof. And she, poor child—poor, little, forsaken Gretchen—how little she guesses!"

He threw himself on the bed by which he had been kneeling, his face hidden on his folded arms. The bitter loneliness of his life, the hardship of long repression, came home to him with added force now.

"He will come home," he said to himself, "and she will forgive him, and the past will be forgotten. She may be happy yet. It is in his power to make her so, and I can only say—Heaven's will be done. Happiness is not for me!"

But, though he said it, he could not take the hard truth home to his heart; could not, in the force, and strength, and passionate craving of manhood, resign himself coldly to the self-abnegation which his words breathed.

How he could have loved her! nay, why deceive himself!—how he did love her!—how happy he would have made her! And yet Fate had given her to a coward and a traitor, in whom she saw the ideal of her girlhood's dreams and the lover of her innocent youth.

Adrian Lyle had had many dark hours in his life, but not one so dark as this; through deep and bitter waters did his soul pass, well-nigh overwhelmed by their depth and blackness. Was this life, this terrible strain on mental and physical forces? Must it be all sacrifice, all struggle, and then the darkness and silence of eternal night?

At this juncture thought seemed to cease. A strange lull and calm came over him. His brain throbbed less painfully; the laboured beating of his heart grew slow and quiet; the strained and fevered look died out of his eyes.

He closed his eyes and lay there for some moments longer, thankful for the lull that had followed that storm of awakened feeling, considering whether the duties of life might not yet be powerful enough to claim his services, to enchain his attention, and to fill his heart, though actual and personal happiness were denied him.

Some half hour later a little note was brought to him. It contained a few lines in German, written by Anna von Waldstein.

"She knows me—she forgives me—we are happy. Oh, my friend, thank Heaven for us! I feel that I am not worthy to do so. Come to me this evening, and I will tell you our plans.

"ANNA VON WALDSTEIN."

He read it, then folded it up, and slowly put it away.

"I must act now," he said; "there will be time enough presently for dreams."

Alexis Kenyon had kept long vigil by her father's side before, at last, he opened his eyes and saw her. It seemed to her that, in that first memory of recognition, there was something of terror and apprehension replacing the old idolised tenderness.

She bent over him, all her pride and languor gone now, only an infinite compassion for the present, an intense remorse for

the past, living in her heart and breathing in her soothing and pitiful words.

Yet her presence seemed to distress him; and, when at his imperative signs they placed paper and pencil before him once again, he wrote, "Bring Adrian Lyle."

When that message came, the young clergyman smiled bitterly.

"I am not even to have the luxury of solitude," he thought to himself; but even as he thought it, he felt ashamed of the momentary selfishness it embodied.

A few moments later he was in that dark and mournful room once more—that room where the flower-like beauty and indolence of Alexis Kenyon looked to him so strangely out of place.

Sir Roy's eyes brightened as they rested on Adrian Lyle.

He took the pencil once again, and traced on the sheet of paper before him one word, "Anna."

Adrian Lyle looked at it in amazement. "Anna"! He thought of Anna von Waldstein, but it seemed impossible that Sir Roy should want to see her. He looked doubtfully at the sick man. There was no mistaking the almost frenzied eagerness of that beseeching look.

"Do you mean," he asked, "Madame von Waldstein?"

Sir Roy's lips moved convulsively; then underneath the name he wrote, "alone."

"You wish," asked Adrian Lyle, "to see her alone?"

"Yes, yes," muttered the trembling lips.

More and more bewildered Adrian Lyle turned to Alexis.

"Your father," he said, "wishes to see a lady staying in this hotel, and to see her alone. That is what he has conveyed to me. Shall I bring her?"

"What is her name?" asked Alexis. "Do you know her?"

"Yes," he said gravely. "I know her, but I was not aware that your father did."

"You are sure," she asked, "that you have not misunderstood him?"

Adrian Lyle looked again at the agitated face, the agonised entreaty of the watching eyes.

"I am sure," he said, "that I have not. And though we may not understand his motives, I think we must humour them."

"Very well," said the girl proudly. "He seems to have every confidence in you. I will go into the next room with the nurse, until this mysterious interview is over."

She withdrew at once, and Adrian Lyle went on his errand.

Anna von Waldstein was as much astonished as himself on receiving the message. The name was unknown to her, save through its relationship to Neale Kenyon; but feeling assured that it must concern Gretchen, she accompanied Adrian at once.

"The child is asleep," she said softly, as they passed along the carpeted corridor. "I persuaded her to go to bed again. She is so weak and frail, and all her strength seems gone. All that has happened is just like a dream to her; but her mind is as clear and sensible now as ever it was."

"Thank Heaven for that," said Adrian Lyle solemnly. "It is like a miracle."

"I shall thank Heaven," she said humbly, "every hour I live for such a friend as you."

"I!"—and the blood came in a flame to his pale and haggard face. "Oh, no. You must not say that. I have done nothing but my duty. Indeed I wish no thanks."

"I know that," she said, and there were tears in the beautiful, proud eyes. "And I know what 'duty' has cost you. Her eyes are blinded by sorrow; but mine——"

He laid his hand upon her arm with a gesture of entreaty.

"If you are, indeed, a friend," he said brokenly, "say no more. Let me keep my miserable secret to myself to my life's end."

Then he opened the door by which they stood, and the nurse passed out, and he led Anna von Waldstein to the side of that changed and shattered wreck of humanity whose summons had seemed so inexplicable a thing.

"Don't go," she said hoarsely, and a shudder of terror shook her frame.

Adrian Lyle looked at the sick man.

"Shall I leave you?" he asked.

There was an imperative sign in the negative.

He turned to the shocked and trembling woman.

"He can understand what you say, but he can only write his answers. Here are pencil and paper. I will retire beyond earshot; if you want me, you can call."

He went to the farthest window and stood there looking out at the street below. The faint murmur of the woman's voice; the hoarse, harsh sounds of the sick man's,

came to his ear from time to time. Then a rustling of paper, a sudden death-like silence, and, following it, a low cry of horror so intense that instinctively Adrian Lyle turned towards the bed, and his startled eyes beheld the woman sway suddenly forwards, the paper crushed to her heart; her voice moaning out in piteous accents that it could not be true; anything, anything but that. Had Heaven not punished her enough?

He sprang forwards, then paused, arrested by the change in the sick man's face, by the terrible convulsive workings of the features; the hoarse and almost unintelligible sounds issuing from the white and quivering lips.

"Our child!" that was what they cried; "our child! And I the instrument in God's dread hand to bring her young head to the dust of shame. Anna—say you forgive—say——"

There was no time for further entreaty. No time, and in very truth no need, for the poor changed face was hidden on a woman's breast, and the clasp of tender and forgiving arms were round that shattered wreck of manhood, and, amidst the passion of her sobs, a broken voice wailed out that the past was all forgotten, and every bitter memory washed away in pity; that the heart on which he leaned had never ceased to love him, and never would; that the dark road so long trodden by those proud and haughty feet was fairer than any path of peace, since it had brought her to his side again; and, so with tears, and sighs, and broken words those two hearts made their peace, and all their history grew plain; and, if sorrow and remorse closed in that closing life, it yet left it hushed, and calmed, and soothed by the tenderest forgiveness for which man had ever sued, and ever suffering womanhood had granted.

Adrian Lyle moved softly back to his post by the distant window. Something was murmuring in his ear; a voice of strange purpose—over and over again like the refrain of a haunting song came its broken words.

"The sins of the fathers—the sins of the fathers——"

CHAPTER II.

"NEITHER DO I CONDEMN THEE."

AT sunset that day Sir Roy Kenyon died.

Adrian Lyle held his secret in his keep-

ing; but he was little likely to betray it to any living creature, least of all to the sorrow-stricken girl, who found herself alone and unprotected in this first trial of her life.

It struck him as somewhat strange that he should have three women dependent on him at the same time, and that all were individually linked to the dead man's memory by just one act of folly and guilt in his past life.

When, at Anna von Waldestein's request he went to her rooms that evening, he learnt more fully and completely the circumstances of that past which had had such brief existence—foreshadowed such terrible consequences.

Woman-like, she now had naught but excuse and extenuation for the selfishness which had wrecked her own young life. She had forgiven him—she, who alone held the right to blame or accuse! She had loved him blindly and passionately—she had forsaken all others for him; but she had not made him happy. She was proud, wilful, exacting. The dream had been too wild and sweet not to have a sudden and bitter awakening. They drifted apart in spirit long before the actual rupture came. Duty called him to his own home and his own land; she deemed herself deserted and became unreasonable. Hard and cruel words were spoken, words hard to forget, and bearing bitter fruit. Then came the illness that brought her well-nigh to the gates of death, and then that desperate resolve which gave her back her place in the world at a cost she little thought of then.

All this she poured out to Adrian Lyle's ear in an agony of remorse and humiliation; all this he heard in that character of priest which made such confession sacred, in that sympathy of manhood which was strong enough and brave enough to counsel and help, even though his own heart was wrung with suffering and despair.

"I must go away from here," she said at last, when her pitiful tale was ended, and her tears had ceased to flow, "I and my child. She will never leave me now; we will live for each other in some place where our history is unknown, where peace and rest may yet be found. I could not bear to look upon his child and know that mine is an outcast, and must never know her father's name——"

Adrian Lyle started.

"Gretchen is scarcely seventeen, is she?" he asked. "If so, the other daughter——"

"I know," she said, and turned her face aside: "I know it to-day for the first time. He was not free; he could not have married me even had the laws of my country been less hard. But he was so unhappy, and I loved him as well as any wife could have done. Only I could not content him. I think that I tried him too much for content. Well, I have had my punishment."

Ay, that she had. If ever sin might be expiated by suffering, surely there was hope in Heaven for this poor sinner, who repented—repented in very dust and ashes of humiliation. And Adrian Lyle, listening to her story, and looking on her face, could say not one harsh word.

Let who will blame him—a Christian priest, lending ear of compassion and not of condemnation, to such guilt as this; thinking it no wrong to give hand and trust and fellowship to this sorely-tried and erring sister, saying only, "Neither do I condemn thee—go and sin no more."

The march of events was still rapid for Adrian Lyle. All the melancholy arrangements for the removal of Sir Roy's remains to the Abbey had to be performed, as Alexis wished the funeral to take place there. Lawyers had to be written to, friends and relations informed, and the one woman who had loved him best of all was the only one who dared not approach, or give any signs of remembrance, save the cross of white lilies which was placed upon his breast by Adrian Lyle's hands.

Gretchen was still so weak and helpless that removal was out of the question. Her mother watched her in an agony of dread in no way lessened by the grave looks and evasive answers of the medical man whom Adrian Lyle had called in.

It was with a very heavy heart that he accompanied Alexis Kenyon on that melancholy journey homewards. The task in itself was distasteful, leaving out of the question the circumstances under which he had left. But the girl could not travel alone with that melancholy burden, and he felt that he must carry still further his principles of self-denial.

He left Alexis at the Abbey, where Lady Breresford was already installed, and with a sigh of relief took his way to his old lodging near the church.

The dusk was drawing rapidly on as he walked swiftly down the avenue, and, branching off, took a short cut that led through the park to the village. His feet

made no sound on the damp and sodden earth, and as he moved under the dark boughs his figure was scarcely distinguishable. So it was that, coming suddenly face to face with another figure, advancing from the opposite direction, both stopped in mutual curiosity—a curiosity that, on Adrian Lyle's part, was soon satisfied, for he made but one rapid stride, and had seized the man in a grip of iron.

"So, my friend," he exclaimed triumphantly, "we have met again, have we? Good. You will now have the kindness to give me certain information of which I stand in need, and that without delay, or——"

"Or what, Signor Priest?" asked Bari, scoffingly. "I know your English laws. I am not to be threatened with impunity. I know what is law for assault. What is your intention then?"

"My intention," said Adrian Lyle, his hand closing more firmly on the man's collar, "is to know the true reason for your spite against me; then the motives that have led you to betray Mr. Kenyon to his uncle; and what made you vent your fiendish malignity on the unfortunate girl whom, in conjunction with your master, you so skilfully deceived?"

"And if I refuse to answer the Signor's questions?" demanded Bari with a sneer.

"I shall find means to make you," said Adrian Lyle calmly. "When I first saw your face in Venice, it brought back some memory to my mind, which then I was not able to define very clearly; but I have considered the matter since, and it has occurred to me that ten years ago in Oxford a certain Baptiste Leoni had made himself unpleasantly notorious by reason of——"

"Monsieur," interrupted the man in a changed and terrified voice, "there is no need to say more. I will give you the information you desire."

"Ah," said Adrian Lyle quietly, as he looked down at the shrinking, ashy face, "I thought we should come to terms before long. So the sword still hangs over your head, my friend, changed as is your name and appearance. You are scarcely wise, then, to set foot in England, even though so long a time has passed. But to business: While in the pay of Mr. Kenyon as his servant, you conveyed private information to his uncle, Sir Roy, of his conduct? Is it not so?"

"Yes," answered Bari sulkily.

"The details, however," continued Adrian Lyle, "were not always strictly correct.

But let that pass. Why did you spy on the nephew for the purpose of supplying the uncle with information?"

"Why?" repeated the man—"mais, ma foi, why? Monsieur might know the reason without asking. It was to my advantage."

"And was it," asked his interrogator, "to your advantage to assist in the disgraceful project by which an innocent child was ruined?"

"I was commissioned by Sir Roy to see that his nephew got into no entanglement—serious, that is to say. It was understood that he was to marry Miss Kenyon, and I did my duty accordingly."

"Your duty! Scoundrel, thief, spy that you are! How dare you pollute that word by your interpretation? I see your motives clearly enough now. You were in the pay of both; and you played the one against the other. Well, one paymaster has failed you—Sir Roy Kenyon is dead; and, before his nephew takes his place here, I warn you that he shall hear from my lips the whole of your double-dealing. We will see then what you will gain in the future. Miss Kenyon knows everything, and your master's secret has been published to the world at large in this recent trial. You have played your cards badly after all; and, if you are on your way to the Abbey now, I give you warning that you will be turned from the door ignominiously. Your plot against myself is clear enough; you sent me to Mrs. Kenyon's on a false errand, in order to——"

"Mrs. Kenyon!" cried Bari, in a sudden rage and fury which got the better of his cowardice. "Ha, ha! a fine Mrs. she. Breaking her vows, leaving her home at voice of the first man who asks her. My faith, yes. She to be a victim! Why, if not Mr. Kenyon, it would have been another. It was in her; she is of her mother's blood! Oh, a fine innocent, yes——"

"You scoundrel!" muttered Adrian Lyle hoarsely, "don't dare breathe a word against her, as you value your life! You forget that I know you; a word from me, and that old crime may still be brought home. If I show you mercy, it is not that you deserve it, but simply to spare pain to others. But listen: you shall take yourself out of England without delay; you shall swear never to molest or importune Miss Kenyon or the lady, who in my eyes, has every right to be considered your master's wife. If you fail to promise

this or to fulfil it, I shall give the police that hint which once might have been so useful. You best know what you have to fear from revelations of your past."

Again that grey, hard look came over Bari's face. His eyes flashed hatred, black and bitter as his own heart, at the noble face and form that towered above him. For a moment he was silent, balancing in his mind the contending advantages of defiance or submission. The sting of truth in Adrian Lyle's words made him doubly furious. He had indeed played his cards badly. In his anxiety to reap the rich harvests thrown in his way, he had thought to make the young clergyman but a tool for his own skill to fashion and to use. Instead of that, he had to acknowledge himself beaten off the field. The very air he breathed seemed to narrow and contract about him; the long-hidden terrors of a guilty past sprang back to life, and bade him be cautious ere he defied his antagonist now. He drew a deep breath—he made one last effort at assertion.

"I suppose," he said, "that you will make it worth my while if I give the promise."

The suggestion seemed to rouse Adrian Lyle to such fury as the man could scarcely credit. His face flushed; his eyes grew black with wrath. The hand which still retained its hold on Bari's collar shook him to and fro in a sudden impulse of passion.

"Cur and cheat that you are," he cried between his set teeth, "never one farthing of mine shall bribe you to that which justice demands as a right. Take your ill-gotten gains and rid this country of your presence before another sun has set, or by the might of Heaven above you shall repent the hour you refused my mercy."

The man raised his chill and bloodless face to the lowering sky.

"Mercy!" he echoed in a strange and far-off voice. "The mercy of a priest? Ha! ha! it's the first time I have heard of it."

"Take care," said Adrian Lyle, releasing him and pointing straight down the dark and sombre path, "that it is not the last. There lies your way, take it. I pray that I may never see your face again."

Bari turned, and, like a beaten hound, slunk away, cringing out of sight amidst the falling shadows; and Adrian Lyle—his breast heaving with stormy passion, all the loyalty, and strength, and uprightness of his nature in revolt against this miserable traitor—stood there still, doing battle with himself and the feelings

that this man always roused, feelings which he told himself were less temperate and forbearing than his office demanded, but not inexcusable in face of the provocation received.

"And there is still another," he thought in his heart, as he remembered that even now Neale Kenyon's face might be set homewards. "Heaven give me strength and patience. The hardest trial of my life must soon be met."

CHRONICLES OF THE WELSH COUNTIES.

BRECKNOCK AND GLAMORGAN.

IN the modern counties of Brecknock and Glamorgan it is easy to recognise the old Welsh districts of Brycheiniog and Morganwg, each of which had its petty Prince, subject nominally to the Prince of South Wales. The town of Brecon, and the valley of the Uak in which it lies, may represent for us the whole county; for, excepting the pretty little town of Crickhowel, there is no other place of importance within the shire bounds. Crickhowel is Craig Howel, so called from a rock on which Howel, a Prince of Gwent, established a fortified post, when he harried the lands of the Prince of Brycheiniog.

The ancient annals of Wales are one long-continued chronicle of such harryings and plunderings, of internecine wars, of sudden forays, and of interminable feuds, which there was no strong central power to repress.

The Welsh built no towns, and hated the restraints of walled enclosures; and the strong feudal castles which the Normans built at every point of vantage, were to them so many monuments of a hated and an alien domination.

The Palace of the Prince of Brycheiniog was but a wattled booth, which might have been built in a day, and yet its arrangements were regulated by a highly complicated code. The high Court of the Prince was held on the turf of a grassy bank, the Prince's chief privilege being that he might sit with his back to the sun; but the laws he administered were well settled and just; compared with which the grand Coutumier of the Normans, which was the vade mecum of that pushing race, seems altogether clumsy and barbaric.

Up the valley of the Uak came the Norman adventurers, making their way wherever mailed horsemen could ride;

but powerless among the hills and wilds. They penetrated as far as Brecon as early as 1093, and Bernard de Newmarch, the leader of the horde, built a castle on the neck of ground where the river Honddu joins the Uak: a junction which gives the town its Welsh name of Aberhonddu. The site is fertile and beautiful, and about the ruins of Norman castle and Norman priory are now pleasant walks and gardens. There are remains, too, of the old town walls which once protected the burghers of the town—mostly English settlers—from the fierce rushes of the Welsh from the neighbouring hills. The town seems to lie at the very foot of those dark and frowning summits known as the Brecknock Beacons, or, sometimes, as Cader Artur—or, Arthur's Chair, once, according to tradition, the seat of dark Druidic rites.

Cader Artur is described by old Speed, who declares that from the summit men were accustomed to cast down "their cloakes, hats, and staves," which never reached the bottom of the precipitous rock, but "were with aire and winde still returned back and blowne up."

While north of Brecon the wild mountain ranges barred the way of the Norman invaders, they penetrated some twelve miles to the westward, still along the valley of the Uak, at places rather a ravine than a valley, as far as Trecastle, where a fragment of Bernard de Newmarch's castle is still in existence. And from Trecastle opens out one of the sweetest and most secluded vales imaginable; all the more lovely in contrast with the wild and rugged aspect of the surrounding country. But although wild and rugged in aspect, the country affords many fertile valleys, where cultivation is carried on with success, and the farmers of Brecon are among the most prosperous of their class; while the town of Brecon, as a local capital, enjoys an exceptional amount of well-being and comfort, and, with its pleasant walks, bright rivers, bridges, mills, and rushing streams, and its picturesque relics of the Old World, is deservedly a favourite residence and resort for the people of South Wales.

The castle, indeed, is now but an appendage to the hotel which bears its name; but part of the old keep still remains, and it bears a name—the Ely Tower—which records an episode of some historical importance.

In this tower, during the reign of Richard Crookback, was imprisoned Morton, Bishop of Ely, under the charge of the

Duke of Buckingham, then the feudal Lord of tower and town. When the Duke became mistrustful of Richard's purposes towards him, and resolved to make terms with the Lancastrian faction, he betook himself to the security of his Welsh retreat.

Oh, let me think on Hastings and begone
To Brecknock while my fearful head is on.

At Brecon the Duke's prisoner became his guest and fellow-conspirator. Through trusty Welsh adherents the pair were in communication with Margaret, Countess of Derby, the directing intelligence of the movement. And thus at Brecon were arranged the details of a plan which ended fatally for Buckingham, but eventually changed the dynasty of the British Crown.

In the country around Brecon, perhaps, the inhabitants preserve more fully than elsewhere in South Wales the primitive character of Welsh sentiment and mode of life; and we may still trace, in an altered form, many of the customs of the Cymry of old. Giraldus, who was himself one of the South Welsh, has given us a pleasant description of the habits of his countrymen, as they existed towards the close of the twelfth century. There were no poor in the country then, for every house was open to everyone, in unrestricted hospitality. Nor was there any luxury for those who were richest in flocks and herds; they only entertained the more people, and practised a more freely-lavished hospitality. In all the chief houses guests were continually arriving or departing. As each party arrived, water was proffered to wash their feet. If they accepted this graceful service, it was understood that the guests remained the night; otherwise, they departed before the evening meal was served. Those who arrived were entertained till evening by the conversation of the young women of the house, and the music of the harp. Nobody was more free and courteous, more sprightly in conversation, than the Welsh woman; for jealousy was a vice almost unknown among the Welsh, and the intercourse between the sexes was on a footing of freedom and equality.

The evening meal was the great event of the day, when all assembled under the common roof. But though plentiful, the meal was frugal; it was served on mats, and consisted chiefly of thin cakes baked on the stones, with sometimes chopped meat and broth. There was plenty of sweet milk, no doubt, and probably toasted cheese. During the whole of the meal, host and hostess waited assiduously upon their guests,

pressing them to eat, and chiding their want of appetite. Only when all the rest were satisfied, did the givers of the banquet take their share of what was left. As night came on, fresh rushes were heaped about the floor; the fire in the centre of the hall was replenished; a great blanket or series of blankets was produced, and the whole company lay down, just as they were, and slept as best they could. There was no superfluity of garments either by day or night. A light cloak and waistcoat, and a thin pair of the garments that were once said to accompany a light heart formed the whole equipment of the travelling Welshman.

And yet the Welshmen were not deficient in personal cleanliness. At some time or other the vapour or Roman bath was known among them, although its use, probably from scarcity of fuel, had gone out before Giraldus wrote. They cut their hair close round ears and eyes, and the face was clean-shaven, except for the moustache above the upper lip. Both men and women were remarkable for their beautiful teeth, not a special characteristic of the Welsh in the present day; and they devoted much pains to their preservation, polishing them sedulously with green hazel twigs and a woollen cloth, avoiding hot meats and drinks. The married women, too, cut their hair short, and wore as head-covering a large white veil folded in the form of a crown. The steeple-crowned beaver hat, once the characteristic head-gear of the Welshwoman, seems to date from no earlier than the seventeenth century, when such hats were generally worn.

The youth of the district were by no means of the home-staying sort to whom Shakespeare attributes homely wits. They roamed the country in bands under chosen leaders, often abroad all night and sleeping during the day. In this way they pursued amatory adventures, always with great secrecy; but the code of honour and morality between the sexes, though loose in some respects, was firm enough in others; and treachery between man and maid was almost unknown.

To lighten the cares of life there were music and song almost universally practised; the harp was rarely silent; and the bagpipe, with the *crwth* or crowd, the rudimentary violin of the period, had also their professors. The pipe seems long ago to have vanished un lamented from the land; but the *crwth* was occasionally heard in later years, the last performer having died, it is said, A.D. 1770. Every man, too, had his

throw-board, on which was played a kind of backgammon; and in some parts chess was known, and had been practised from time immemorial. Then there was football, in which whole districts engaged in contest. Add to these, constant meetings for trial of literary and bardic skill, where shepherds and herdsmen might often bear off the palm from those of higher degree, and it will be seen that the life of the community was sufficiently varied and pleasant, and rich in the elements of sentiment and emotion.

From the secluded valleys of Brecon, we may pass into the land of Morgan—whether named after Morgan Hen, a Prince of the tenth century, or from some more recondite source, is doubtful; but the term Glamorgan appears to have been originally applied to the district now known as the Vale of Glamorgan, the garden of South Wales, celebrated as

The country charming,

With wine, with wives, and with white houses.

The wives and white houses are still there; but the vineyards have shared the fate of those other vineyards in Kent and elsewhere, of which only the memory remains.

The ascendancy of the Normans in Glamorgan was more stubbornly disputed, and yet eventually far more complete, than in Brecon or the adjoining counties; and, hence, there is no part of the country more thickly studded with the remains of feudal castles, many of which were of great size and immense strength.

As to how the Normans first came into the land of Morgan, we have a graphic account from Welsh sources in a story that recalls the still more ancient story of the coming of the Saxons into Britain. The same causes, indeed, were still at work—the jealousy of rival chiefs and the want of unity among the nation in general.

It was in the reign of William Rufus in England, that Rhys-ap-Tudor was Prince of South Wales, a hoary Prince, full ninety years of age, but with the fire and energy of youth still burning within him. Some petty chiefs of the country, venturing to dispute his authority and forming a conspiracy against him, Rhys took the field against them, and drove them from their seats. One of the conspirators was Einion-ap-Colwyn, a Knight who had seen service with the Normans in their wars, and was acquainted with their leaders. He took refuge with Jestyn, Prince of the land of Morgan, who, on account of quarrels

and fancied slights, and perhaps real injuries, hated the Prince of South Wales as he hated no other man, even Saxon or Norman. Jestyn, thirsting for revenge upon Rhys, listened eagerly to his guest's account of the skill and powers of the Normans among whom he had served, and of his intimacy with their chiefs. "Enlist me a Norman band," said Jestyn, "who shall overthrow that old ruffian Rhys, and you shall have my fairest daughter Nest, and a dower of the best lands of my holdings."

Einion undertook the task, and crossed the Severn into Gloucestershire, where he met with Robert Fitzhamon, and proposed to him the adventure. Robert agreed to the terms—a heavy payment in gold was to be the reward for the service—and soon engaged twelve other Knights in the enterprise, who raised among them three thousand men-at-arms. The whole contingent sailed across the Severn Sea, and put themselves under the guidance of Jestyn. Old Rhys, nothing dismayed, gathered his forces and met the foreign array upon the field of Hirwain Wrgan, the long meadow, which Gwrgan, a Prince of a former generation, had given to the men of Aberdare. Old Rhys was killed, and his force was dispersed, and Jestyn at once paid down the stipulated hire of his allies. Tradition has preserved a memory of this transaction in the name of the site where the gold was paid, The Normans were satisfied with their pay, and marched off to Penarth, where there are docks and ships in plenty at this present time, there to embark for home.

Then it was Einion's turn to demand his reward: when was the marriage feast to begin, and how soon should he enter into possession of those fat lands? Jestyn turned upon him with scorn and derision. "Never shall my daughter be the wife of a traitor! Begone!" Einion went, sprang to horse, and away on the track of his friends, the Normans. As he reached the sea-shore, the last of the train had embarked, anchors were being lifted, sails unfurled, and the whole flotilla was about to depart. Einion waved his mantle frantically from the beach; his signals were observed, and a boat soon made for the shore. To Fitzhamon the Welsh Knight explained his hard case, laid open the weakness of Jestyn, besought him to return and do his friend justice, and possess himself of the rich land of Morgan. Fitzhamon hailed the opportunity with enthusiasm;

the army was quickly disembarked, and marched upon Jestyn's camp, which was surprised and destroyed, the Prince himself being driven as a fugitive from the land. Then the land was divided among the victors, Fitzhamon assuming the feudal headship, while each of his twelve Knights carved out for themselves subject baronies. Einion, however, also received a share with one of Jestyn's daughters to wife; nor were the descendants of the native Princes left unprovided for. Sundry of the Norman Knights, too, married the daughters of the chiefs they dispossessed, among these one Payn Turberville, who gained Coyty Castle and the lands about it without a blow, by marrying the daughter of its possessor. On this account he declined to pay dues to his feudal superior, as holding by Welsh and not by English tenure, and he joined the Welsh in their resistance to the Norman Lords. Some kind of peaceable arrangement was made, and Fitzhamon seems to have adjusted his claims to the satisfaction of the Welsh; and perhaps the Welshmen found their Norman rulers not more extortionate than their native Princes had been, and decidedly less turbulent.

More like a King in his own country than a subject vassal was the Earl of Glamorgan, with his Chancery, his Exchequer, his Mint, and dozens of subordinate offices. But the last of the line of Fitzhamon fell at Bannockburn, childless at the age of twenty-three, and his three sisters divided the good things of the Lordship among the noble English families into which they had married. The chief seat of the Norman Earls was at Cardiff, where a strong castle was built, the keep of which and a gateway still remain in the grounds of the modern residence of the Marquis of Bute. Lord Bute does not, however, hold the castle direct from the descendants of Fitzhamon. The castle came by descent to the great Earl of Warwick, and so through his daughter Ann to Richard Crookback, and thus to the Crown of the Tudors at the battle of Bosworth. Then it was granted to the Herberts, and thence came by descent to Lord Bute. The castle is not much, perhaps, but the rights and dues belonging thereto are worthy of all envy and admiration.

Fitzhamon's Knights, every one of the twelve, set to work to build castles: there are existing ruins of thirty castles in the county, many of them so close together that it is a wonder how their owners managed to get a living.

But the most splendid and extensive of the castles of Glamorgan is Caerphilly, which, although not so elegant or richly ornamented as the castles of King Edward the First in North Wales, is more extensive than any of these, and occupies a space of thirty acres within its various defences. The castle lies in a marshy kind of plain surrounded at a distance by barren hills; and it is difficult to fathom the purpose of such an enormous fortress in such a position, built as it was, not out of national resources, but from the funds of a subject Lordship.

Some kind of purpose, indeed, it served during the troubled reign of Edward the Second, when it was in the hands of the De Spensers, and was the refuge of the King himself for a few short days. The King and the De Spensers hoped that the Welshmen would rally to the cause of their first English Prince, and with the support of this great stronghold might make head against the Queen and Mortimer and the English Baronage. But in this they were disappointed, and Edward left the castle before the siege commenced, to throw himself into the hands of his enemies. The youngest of the De Spensers was left in the castle, which made a gallant defence, and finally capitulated on terms. From that time the castle seems to have been practically abandoned; and, when Owen Glendwr occupied the place a long time afterwards, it was but a melancholy ruin.

Another great pile, which seems to us without any particular *raison d'être*, is Saint Donat's Castle, halfway between Cowbridge and Bridgend. There for nearly seven centuries was established the family of D'Esterling, or Stradling, the founder of which was one of Fitzhamon's Knights, and it bears the mark of each succeeding century in its varied and picturesque outline. The castle is still partially occupied, and has, perhaps, been continuously inhabited since its first foundation.

The Normans, as usual, were not remiss in the way of building monasteries to atone for their violent deeds. The Abbey of Neath, surrounded by iron works and furnace fires, reminds one of Kirkstall, in Yorkshire, which exists under like conditions. It was founded by the De Granvilles, and colonised by Grey Friars from Savigny, in France, but afterwards became a regular Cistercian monastery.

Then there is Margam, an early founda-

tion by the famous Robert, Earl of Gloucester, the relics of which are to be found in the lovely grounds of Mr. Talbot's seat, backed by a noble oak forest, which covers Margam Hill with its dense foliage. And here you may fancy yourself in some sub-tropical region, so rich are the forms of the exotic plants in this favoured nook. The orangery at Margam owes its first establishment to the wreck of a Spanish vessel on the neighbouring shore. The vessel was freighted with orange and lemon plants, which were intended as a gift to one of our English monarchs—as tradition ranges between Queen Elizabeth and William of Orange, it will be safer not to say which. The plants were preserved at Margam till they could be forwarded to the Court of Saint James, and they were eventually bestowed in fee upon their custodians by good Queen Anne.

The Priory of Ewenny is another Norman foundation, that is, if Maurice de Londres were really a Norman, and not a good honest Cockney. Anyhow, the fine church of the priory, which is still in use, is of the early Norman character. The whole of the priory buildings bear traces of great defensive strength, being, no doubt, in considerable danger from hostile raids.

Then there is the Cathedral of Llandaff, which lies in a sweet secluded site; of no great pretensions as a cathedral, but the seat of one of the most ancient Bishoprics in the Kingdom, which has probably existed from the days of the Roman dominion in Britain.

More celebrated even than the cathedral, in the annals of the ancient Church of Wales, is the College of Llantwit, or Llanelltyd Fawr, founded by St. Illtyd himself, it is said, some time in the fifth century, and which became one of the chief seats of the learning of the Celtic Church. Here were, in the days of its early prosperity, seven halls, four hundred houses, and upwards of two thousand scholars, who hither resorted from Gaul and every part of Britain.

According to tradition, St. Illtyd presided for ninety years over his college, and, allowing him to be young when he began, he must be credited with having attained a patriarchal age. Some of the most distinguished of the Britons were here educated: Gildas, the historian; David, the future Patron Saint of Wales; Taliesin and Talhaiarn, noted bards;

Princes and Chiefs of Britain and Brittany without number.

The college had fallen almost to decay when Fitzhamon established himself in the country, and he re-established the place as a priory, making it a cell to Tewkesbury Abbey. This foundation was still in existence at the Reformation, but without any importance. Yet the ancient fame of the place was held in memory by the people, who brought there their dead from all parts, so that the church and neighbouring lands became one large cemetery.

Ecclesiastical in name, but not at all so in present aspect, is Merthyr Tydfil—Tydfil having been the virgin daughter of the original Brychant, who gave his name to Brecon, who was killed by pagan Saxons in the neighbourhood; hence, Merthyr or Martyr Tydfil.

There were ironworks here from an early period. It is impossible to be more definite than this in default of authentic history; and when the Kentish ironworks gave out, we hear of many of the Kentish founders removing to this place. But everyone will tell you that Robert Crawshay was the chief founder of Merthyr, a man of the present century, whose immediate ancestor was a Yorkshire lad who came to London to seek his fortune, and found it in a kind of wholesale ironmongering establishment in York Place. There was a large trade done there in flat irons, and, according to Mr. Crawshay, the London laundresses who came to buy them were so ready of hand that they managed to steal two for every one they bought. The young Yorkshire lad was set to sell flat irons on commission, and was so successful in dodging the laundresses that he laid the foundations of a fortune which was destined to revolutionise Merthyr Tydfil.

With its iron capital, Glamorgan has also its copper capital in Swansea, where copper smelting is carried on, with numerous other works of a sulphurous and smoky nature. Not that there is any copper to speak of about Swansea, but plenty of coal, and it pays better to bring the copper ore to the coal, than to take the coal to the copper ore.

It only now remains to notice the curious peninsula of Gower, which has a history and settlement of its own, having been first conquered and colonised by Henry de Newburgh, Earl of Warwick, A.D. 1099, who defeated the Welsh Princes in a battle fought near Penrice Castle. Subsequently Gower had a share of the Flemish settlers,

who also colonised part of Pembroke; and, while the rest of Glamorgan, in spite of Norman rulers, remained thoroughly Welsh in its language and manners, the peninsula of Gower has been for ages an English-speaking country, and shares with Pembroke the name of The Little England beyond Wales. And this seems to show the complete expulsion of the original Welsh-speaking inhabitants.

For remarkable, indeed, is the tenacity with which the Welshman clings to his native language. In spite of centuries of discouragement, the Welshman has not become English; and so far from being in danger of becoming extinct, the language is actually more widely spoken and its literature enjoys a greater circulation than ever. And we may well believe that there was something inspired in the words of the old Welshman of Pencadair, spoken so long ago as the reign of Henry the Second, and indeed addressed to that very monarch.

"Your power, O King, may weaken and distress this nation; but it can never be totally subdued by the wrath of man, unless the wrath of God concur. Nor do I think that any other nation than this of Wales, no, nor any other language, shall answer for this corner of the earth, when the last roll shall be called on the Day of Judgment."

IN THE OLD HOME.

THE blank, uncurtained windows stare
Like sightless eyes along the wall;
The doors stand open everywhere;
The vacant rooms are silent all,
Save when my passing footfall breaks
The stillness, and an echo wakes.

And this was home, and this the place
Where earliest years flowed smoothly on,
Its warmest hearth an empty space,
Its truest friendships dead and gone;
The fire of passion burnt away,
And life in ashes, cold and grey.

And here, in manhood's latest prime,
With none that kindred blood can claim,
I stand unknown, forgotten. Time
Has put aside our race and name;
And horn of bud, and leaf, and bough,
The barren tree is useless now.

O childhood! past beyond recall;
O youth! with happiest memories fraught.
Though after days may bring to all
The graver brow, the deeper thought,
The ripest wisdom years impart
Weighs light against a happy heart.

Too late! Why loiter here? Behold!
The noon is spent, the day is o'er,
The mists are gathering damp and cold,
The vanished hours return no more.
No magic spell has power to raise
The friends, the home of happier days.

BETWEEN THE TWO.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE two houses stood side by side on the white, dusty road which leads out of Saint Zite towards Toulouse. The front doors opened abruptly on to the "trottoir"; the front windows looked straight on to the busy highway; and, on reception days, when the outside shutters were opened, an inquisitive passer-by could see between the white curtains what visitors had come to pay their respects to Madame Amboise or Madame Lacambre; but reception days only came once a week, and the drawing-room shutters were generally closed.

There was more life at the back of the houses, in the shady, gravelled courtyard, where old Monsieur Lacambre fed his chickens; where Monsieur le Commandant Amboise smoked his cigarettes; where Mesdames Lacambre and Amboise sat with their work on summer evenings, discussing business—chiefly other people's; where the five mischievous Amboise children dirtied and tore their pinafores, to the distraction of their Cousin Gabrielle, and threw stones at Monsieur Lacambre's chickens, whenever a favourable opportunity occurred.

From whichever side you took your observation they were not romantic-looking houses—to speak truly, they were essentially commonplace; but, to Joel Chester, Professor of English at the College of Saint Zite, the one enchanted spot of the whole world was one of those two houses in the Faubourg Champenatier, and Thursday afternoons, when he gave an English lesson to the Amboise children, were the red-letter days by which he reckoned his calendar and dated his hopes; for Gabrielle Amboise, the niece of Monsieur le Commandant, who sat with the children while Joel administered his doses of instruction, had taken possession of his heart, and his head, and his hopes, and of all that any enthusiastic young lover can lay at the feet of his first love.

Joel was just six-and-twenty. He was tall and fair, broad-shouldered and erect, with blue-grey eyes and bright brown hair. He was generally acknowledged to be handsome and agreeable, and he was decidedly clever; altogether, the sum total of his good qualities made up a very fascinating man. But there was one thing against him which all his advantages could not

cover up or disguise—he was lamentably poor, and there seemed small chance of his growing richer. So, when he reckoned his calendar and adjusted his hopes by his weekly visits to the Maison Amboise, he was a sadly foolish fellow, for Gabrielle was poor too, poorer than himself; and if he could have realised his dream of bliss and married her at once, they would have had the wolf at the door with the shortest possible notice, which would have been anything but a desirable climax to their romantic attachment.

I suppose if Gabrielle had been the daughter of Madame Amboise instead of only her niece by marriage, she would not have been left alone with a handsome young man, especially such a poor one; but Madame had not been circumspect, and the mischief—if mischief it were—had every opportunity for growing. Joel seized his opportunity after a certain lesson, when the children had rushed away; and, while they in the courtyard were calling down the vials of Monsieur Lacambre's wrath, he, upstairs, had pleaded his cause, and won it. They promised to love one another for ever, or even longer if possible, and—this was Mademoiselle Gabrielle's stipulation—to keep the secret of their promise strictly to themselves, lest her guardians should take a too matter-of-fact view of Joel's prospects, and put an end to their romance without delay.

It was a very delicious idyl to both of them. Gabrielle had had a hard time of it with poverty and one thing or another during her twenty-three years of life. Her past contained little that was pleasant to recall, and she had not until now found any charm in looking forward to the future. As it was, she saw—she would have profited very little by what she knew of the world's ways had she failed to see—that her clandestine engagement was quite as likely to bring her nothing but poverty after a long weary waiting, if it did not bring her worse trials; but it was pleasant to love, to be loved, to have an idol and to be an idol, to have some one to dream of while one was darning stockings or replenishing the ever-diminishing stock of pinafores; it was pleasant to drift away down the current of sweet recollection and to lose the thread of Madame Lacambre's inexhaustible gossip or her equally interminable stories of her son Adolphe; it was pleasant to feel Joel's passionate eyes fixed on her face, while the children bungled and stumbled over their trans-

lation ; and pleasanter still to listen to his sweet stolen words when the lesson was over, and he ventured to linger for a few minutes in the dingy school-room. Truly these were times when Gabrielle would lay her hands in her lap and wonder what she had done to deserve such a sudden glorious burst of sunshine.

So the summer slipped away ; the longest day came and went ; the chickens which the children had chased on the memorable day of Joel's declaration were nearly fit to be killed and eaten ; the peaches were ripening out of the children's reach in the July sunshine. In the regular course of events Joel ought to have been thinking of leaving Saint Zite for his annual holiday, and of going to rejoice the eyes of his mother in England, who very properly considered him to be one of the best and finest sons a mother ever had. The holidays were so near that he had come to give his last lesson for the present at the Maison Amboise. The task of teaching English to a French child is by no means an enviable occupation, yet Joel felt truly sorry when he closed the books that day, and sent the unruly Amboise children rushing into the freedom of their holidays.

"And you will be going to England, I suppose?" queried Mademoiselle Gabrielle, as Joel, with a somewhat doleful face, watched her collect the books and pens.

"I don't know, my darling. I don't feel as if I could go to England this summer."

"Why not?" demands Mademoiselle, with great naïveté. "You surely would not pass your holiday here?"

"Wouldn't I, indeed?" cried Joel. "If it wasn't rather rough on the mother not to go and see her, do you think I would for one moment think of leaving you for two months?"

"Pooh," replied she, but she did not look as if she meant to snub him ; "two months will soon pass ; though, after all, the time is really six weeks. Six weeks is gone like nothing at all."

"Yes, yes, when you don't want it to go—like the last six weeks—but when one is impatient for the end of it, it is an eternity."

"Then don't be impatient," said Gabrielle philosophically. "Why should you? Nothing can stop the time from passing."

"You hard-hearted child," cried Joel, only half in jest. "Remember we can't write to one another ; at least I can't write to you, and the sight of you is what I live for."

"My dear Joel," said Mademoiselle Gabrielle, with an air of superiority. "I am not hard-hearted, and I am going to reason with you."

"Very well, my darling, reason away ; only kiss me first, for I foresee that your reasoning will want sweetening to make it go down. You are going to say that you cannot write to me either."

"Oh no, I am not going to say anything of the sort. I was going to suppose for a moment that you stayed here instead of going to England. Of course, as you say, for your mother's sake that would be impossible—but if you did, how should we be the better off? You would not be coming to the house for the children's lesson. All the college people would be away ; we should perhaps have two or three chance words with one another under every one's eye in some stupid drawing-room. What is that compared to the ennui of six weeks at Saint Zite, thrown on your own resources?" And Gabrielle looked into her lover's face with an air of conviction.

"The ennui would not be fatal," said Joel plaintively. "If I go to England—at least, of course I am going, but I shall not stay all the time there. I shall come back, and as to seeing one another only in formal visits, that need not be."

"Do you mean that I could meet you anywhere? Oh, that would be so very far out of the question. I dare not—I really—Listen, there is my aunt calling, I must go. Yes, ma tante, I come. Good-bye, my dearest, I will write to you if I possibly can. Yes, I will, and you must think of me ; but to meet you—" and Mademoiselle Gabrielle shook her head sadly but decidedly. "Yes, yes, ma tante, I come. I do but finish laying aside the books."

CHAPTER II.

THE Maison Lacambre was "en fête." The only son was coming to spend a month with his parents. Madame Lacambre wore her best black silk, and Monsieur had discarded his usual home costume of dressing-gown and carpet slippers for an alpaca coat and boots. The Amboise children were overawed into orderly behaviour, and the chickens would have had halcyon days if the arrival of Monsieur Adolphe Lacambre had not struck the death-knell of the plumpest of them.

For Monsieur Adolphe was a great personage. He lived in Paris, which

speaks volumes, and had to be treated accordingly. In his personal appearance he was perhaps a little disappointing—at least Gabrielle Amboise found him disappointing; but then her beau-ideal was an uncommonly well-favoured specimen of humanity, with whom Mr. Adolphe's short stature, sallow complexion, and small irregular features could not enter into comparison. As to age, he must have been on the downhill side of forty, and his years had written themselves on his forehead and round his eyes, and had traced out sundry white streaks in his hair.

All this Gabrielle saw with half a glance, as she sat with her aunt on the Amboise side of the courtyard; while Mr. Adolphe and his parents sauntered, on the first evening of his arrival, up and down in front of the chicken-pens.

"He is not much to look at, is he, *ma tante*?" she murmured to Madame Amboise. "To hear Madame Lacambre talk one would have fancied him an Adonia."

"He is not amiss," replied Madame Amboise indulgently. "If he were not so round-shouldered, I think he would be quite passable."

"You are charitable, *ma tante*."

"Handsome is that handsome does," returned Madame Amboise. "Monsieur Adolphe is a man who has made a good position for himself by ability and perseverance; his looks are a secondary consideration."

Just then Monsieur Adolphe, as if to allow a better opportunity for observation, crossed the courtyard to pay his respects to Madame Amboise. But it was not so much at Madame Amboise as at her niece that he looked while he made his obeisance in the most approved Parisian style.

"Allow me to present you to my husband's niece, Mademoiselle Amboise," said the elder lady, observing the direction of Monsieur Adolphe's glance.

Monsieur Adolphe acknowledged the introduction by a still more consummate bow.

"Mademoiselle, is, doubtless, like myself, a visitor to St. Zite?" he said interrogatively.

Mademoiselle smiled demurely, and replied in the negative.

"Ah, indeed, then I must note Mademoiselle as a fixed star, not as a wandering one; yet I do not remember having seen you here before."

"I have lived with my uncle and aunt for about a year," replied Gabrielle.

"And it is two years since I visited St. Zite. I came in total ignorance that the place had gained so much—so great a charm—since my last visit."

It was a trite compliment, and the flourish with which it was paid did not enhance its value. Gabrielle could not help feeling amused that this plain-faced, cut-and-dried, middle-aged bachelor should deliver himself of such a school-boy speech; yet she felt at the same time more than a little flattered by his notice and his admiring looks. Adolphe Lacambre had always been described by his mother as totally indifferent to the charms of womankind.

"Two years since you were here before!" exclaimed Gabrielle, in reply. "That is a long time."

"At your time of life, Mademoiselle, no doubt it is; but at mine—ah, that makes all the difference. Two years are gone before one has time to think of them, and I come back to St. Zite to realise how long my absence had been, by seeing all the changes that have taken place. Your charming children, for instance, Madame, I could scarcely have recognised them, devoted as I am to children."

"Yes, indeed," replied Madame Amboise, with maternal preoccupation, "they do grow wonderfully fast, especially Madeline."

"How very charming!" answered Monsieur Adolphe, quite irrelevantly.

It was not a brilliant conversation; but it was more memorable than any other in which Monsieur Adolphe had ever joined. As he said "How very charming!" at hap-hazard, and looked down on the dark curly hair and piquant face of Monsieur Amboise's niece, he was conscious of a most unusual sensation in the region of his heart, which impelled him to talk anything, sense or nonsense, so that he could win a glance from those bright brown eyes which looked so nonchalantly across the courtyard, while he stood beside her.

"You have seen Paris, of course, Mademoiselle?" he said presently, no more original remark occurring to him.

"No, Monsieur, I have not. You will consider me terribly provincial, no doubt, but I must admit that I only know the life of Paris by hearsay."

"And what opinion have you formed of Paris life by hearsay?"

"Well," returned Gabrielle, amused by the solemnity of his manner, "I have gathered that it must be vastly more amusing than life in St. Zite."

"It is very bright, and gay, and attractive—outwardly. There is always a great deal to be seen and thought of, and a great deal of work to be done; but, for me, it is a very lonely life—a life the charm of which has long passed away."

Monsieur Adolphe spoke pathetically, and as if he were dealing with an old subject of lamentation, yet in truth this was the very first time it had ever occurred to him to describe his bachelor existence as lonely.

"Have you not many friends in Paris, then?" asked Gabrielle.

"Oh yes, friends as far as they go; but it is when one gets a chance view of domestic life—of a true homelike interior—that one's own forlorn condition becomes apparent."

"We shall expect, then, to hear soon that you are about to renounce your solitary state, and to request our congratulations," said Madame Amboise, looking up archly. From her long acquaintance with Monsieur Adolphe, her knowledge of his settled bachelor habits, she expected a smiling denial; instead of which, to her surprise, over the cautious face of the avocat there passed a slight blush, and he murmured something which she could not hear, but of which she caught the word "happiness." After which, he bade the ladies good evening, and beat a hasty retreat, and followed his parents into the house.

"It would be amusing, if he were to have fallen in love after all," said Madame Amboise, as the door of the Maison Lacambre closed. "It would be really very funny."

"It would be still more funny," said Gabrielle, "if any one had fallen in love with him. Ma foi, ma tante, he is painfully plain at close quarters; fancy having to sit opposite to such a face every day of one's life!"

"I meant no allusion to his looks," replied Madame Amboise somewhat severely, "he has other attractions; and I have no doubt that if he did make an offer to any woman, he would more probably be accepted than refused."

"Good Heavens, ma tante, how could he make an offer of marriage? He scarcely knows how to talk to a woman. Did any one ever hear such wooden remarks as he makes?"

"Ah well, Gabrielle, you, no doubt can afford to be critical—you, who are so richly endowed, can require every man who goes

a wooing to have a fine face, a good figure, brilliant wits, and a handsome fortune; but let me tell you that a girl of sense prefers the solid to the trivial."

"Ah well, ma tante," returned Gabrielle, unmoved by the sarcasm of this reproof, "it will be time enough to scold me for depreciating Monsieur Adolphe when he comes wooing me. In the meantime, it matters very little what I think or say of him."

Perhaps Monsieur Adolphe's devotion to the Amboise children was genuine; anyhow, it was extremely well assumed. He lost no time in renewing his acquaintance with them, and in laying siege to such of their affection as was to be won by lavish presents of bonbons and toys.

"He's not half bad," commented the children, in the course of a fortnight, "although he looks such an old fogey. He met us yesterday afternoon up at St. Antoine, and he bought us a lot of peaches out of the garden of the woman who keeps the wax candles for the shrine, and we sat on the grass by the chapel steps and ate them. Oh, it's grand fun when Monsieur Adolphe meets us out for a walk: he talks to Gabrielle, and we do just as we please. Gabrielle never looks at us."

It was quite true. Monsieur Adolphe had a wonderful gift of meeting with the Amboise party "en promenade," and then of finding a good reason to join them, or, rather, to join Gabrielle, while the children ran helter-skelter behind and before them. Moreover, in the evening, after dinner, he invariably joined the group of ladies in the courtyard, in preference to strolling out along the Boulevards with his father and the Commandant.

It was very evident whither all this was tending; and Madame Amboise already admitted to herself that when Monsieur Adolphe did make an offer of marriage it would matter very vastly what Gabrielle thought of him and of it. What she did think, it was not easy to surmise. Since that first evening she had made no remarks to her aunt in confidence respecting their neighbour's son.

Madame Amboise was puzzled by her reticence; yet it was plain that she did not discourage her elderly admirer, and, from the long pensive fits that sometimes came over the girl, her aunt thought it possible that his marked attentions might be making a conquest of her prejudices.

They had not very long to wait. Before three weeks of Monsieur Adolphe's holiday

had gone by, there came an afternoon when he dressed himself in a solemn, closely-fitting frock coat, and irreproachable continuations; put his extremities into the glossiest of hats, gloves, and boots; and marched with a resolute step out of his parents' front door to that of the adjacent house. He was on his way to make a formal demand for the hand of Monsieur le Commandant's penniless niece. It was a ceremonious visit. The Commandant professed himself overwhelmed with the honour done him in the person of his adopted daughter.

The avocat declared that it was he himself and no other to whom honour would be done, since one smile or one word from the peerless Mademoiselle Gabrielle was of more value to him than any distinction with which he might be tempted.

"You know, cher Monsieur," said the Commandant, with a shade of hesitation, "that my late lamented brother had losses in business. My niece is absolutely and entirely without dowry, and I am not in a position to rectify the deficiency."

Monsieur Adolphe waved his shiny glove with the air of a man who dismisses a trifling question. "To a sordid dowry of pounds, shillings, and pence, I am utterly indifferent; the lady's own charms form a dowry more precious in my eyes than a diamond mine."

To a negotiation carried on in this spirit there could be but one conclusion. Monsieur Amboise was only too delighted to give his unqualified consent to the avocat's unexpected proposal, and to feel assured, as he bowed his visitor out, that here was a very comfortable solution to the uncomfortable problem of his niece's future.

That evening full liberty was accorded to the Amboise children to run whithersoever the spirit of mischief might lead them, while solemn conclave was held by their seniors over the momentous question of Monsieur Adolphe's proposal.

"I wish, ma niece," began Monsieur le Commandant, "to have a few minutes' conversation with you on a most important subject; I mean about your future. Let me see, you are, I believe, three-and-twenty years of age?"

"Three-and-twenty!" cried Madame Amboise. "My dear Charles, she was nearly four-and-twenty when she came to us last May year."

"Ah, indeed," replied the Commandant, "you don't really say so? I should scarcely have believed the time had flown so fast."

"No one grows younger naturally, mon ami," returned Madame Amboise; "and what is more serious is, that when a girl has passed the age of four-and-twenty without a single offer of marriage, she has a fair chance of being an old maid."

"Yes, indeed," added Monsieur Amboise. "And when, moreover, as in our niece's case, the girl has not a sou to bless herself with, offers of marriage are scarcely to be expected."

Gabrielle's understanding would have needed to be far duller than it actually was for her not to have seen whither all this was leading.

"I suppose," she suggested, "that all men do not fall in love with money."

"I don't suppose," replied her aunt, "that any man positively falls in love with money; but, when a man thinks of marrying, money is necessary, and as a rule, a young man cannot afford to overlook a dowry."

"And the few who can afford it are not sufficiently generous," said the Commandant, fingering his trump card with great satisfaction before he played it; but his diplomacy in coming to the point counted for nothing, as far as concealment was concerned. From his last word, Gabrielle knew for a certainty that Monsieur Adolphe wanted to make her his wife.

"Now, Gabrielle," pursued her uncle, "there is nothing your aunt and I would like better than to see you comfortably married to a man on whose character we could rely; until lately, we have seen no prospect of our desire being fulfilled. To-day, your hand has been formally asked in marriage—your lack of fortune making no obstacle—by a man whom we might—" but the Commandant's eloquence was too prolix for his wife.

"Come, Gabrielle," she cried, interrupting him. "Guess who it is, I'll give you three guesses."

"I don't need to guess," replied Gabrielle. "I know without guessing; who else could it be but Monsieur Adolphe Lacambre?"

"Why, you sly little puss, you have gone and lost your heart to him; after all the cutting remarks you made about him at first. You needn't deny it. You have gone crimson. It's perfectly delicious!" and Madame Amboise clapped her hands.

"It is an exceptionally good match for any girl," said Monsieur Amboise.

Then they went on talking it over; they asked her no more questions; they took her willing consent for granted. Gabrielle's

colour came and went; her heart beat at double speed. A number of sweet memories and solemn promises came crowding into her mind; what could she do? It would be so dreadful to cast down her guardian's bright expectations, by telling him that she was bound by promises he knew nothing of to marry a man whom he would never allow her to marry.

She had heard and read of people playing fast and loose with vows and promises; she had always considered such characters, especially the female ones, excessively wicked. She did not wish to be wicked herself, and she did not wish to break poor Joel's heart; on the other hand, she did not want to be poor all her life, and, as to hearts, Monsieur Adolphe had a heart too. At his time of life, a refusal would make him very unhappy; and last, but not least, she dared not, she positively dared not, tell the story of her engagement with Joel, while he was far away in England. She had never foreseen anything like this; she was perfectly helpless; and she knew that she would be miserable whichever way she decided to act.

"I expect the Lacambres will come this evening," said the Commandant, in conclusion, "to hear the result of our deliberations. When shall we say you can be ready, Gabrielle? You know Monsieur Adolphe is past the waiting age, he will be in a hurry to have the time fixed."

"In six weeks or so, I should think," said Madame Amboise, "or a couple of months at the latest. *N'est ce pas, Gabrielle?*"

"You know best, *ma tante*," replied Gabrielle submissively; and, having said that, she knew that the die was cast; that she was so far on the downhill road that turning back was all but impossible, and that she had yielded without a struggle, even without coercion, every claim to womanly constancy and womanly truth.

SOUTH AFRICAN SKETCHES.

TWO LOOKS AT A RIVER.

WE were looking forward to our arrival at the Zout, or Salt River, in the belief that we should at last be able to wash there. At least, such of us as had not been sufficiently long in the colony to have become accustomed to that condition of dirt, which, through the scarcity of water, is imposed upon one almost as a necessity "up country," were so looking forward: and the unward Diamond Field

Transport waggon contained an unusual proportion of "new hands" amongst its passengers on this trip. They were mostly recent arrivals from England; young men pushed by the restless spirit of the Anglo-Saxon, and by a contributory impecuniosity, to leave the scenes of their social successes in the Northern Hemisphere, and rough it for a time in South Africa. It is needless to say that they were bound for the Diamond Fields. They were buoyant and full of spirits, confident that in a few months, or in a year at the most, they would return home with pockets full of money. They talked of short cuts to wealth, and spoke contemptuously of the plodding, muddy-minded men, who were content to grovel on at money-making in the old, conventional grooves, when such magnificent opportunities as those afforded by the diggings were available. Alas, for the rose-coloured pictures of youth! It is now nearly fourteen years since these enthusiasts arrived at the Cape, and they are still there, and have not yet succeeded in amassing those "piles" which were to throw into deep shadow the fortunes of the most successful financiers of Europe.

To the youths the journey had so far proved exceedingly unpleasant. Since they had left Cape Town five days before, all ablution had been confined to a mere daubing of face and hands with a little coffee-coloured water contained in a tin pannikin; and they had been so restricted at a time when, from the intense heat and perpetual clouds of dust, a good bath would have been most necessary and enjoyable. I could not help pitying them, torn as they were by a restless impulse or implacable fate from the charms of town—where the matutinal tub was an article of religious belief; where two clean shirts a day were considered a necessity of life; and where the smallest wrinkle in the smooth expanse of collar or the least speck of dust upon the glossy surface of the coat was a matter of mortal anguish—to be suddenly plunged into dirt inconceivable, where one had to wear the same shirt for a week at least; where washing was impossible; and where fleas, flies, dust, and perspiration combined to make one feel thoroughly miserable. Roughing it they were prepared for, hard fare and bedless nights they would have put up with; but this horrible condition of uncleanness was a thing that they had not anticipated, and their complaints were loud and frequent.

"I don't mind the discomfort and want of sleep," murmured my next-door neighbour in the waggon, a smooth-faced youth with fair hair and light blue eyes; and who, having neglected to study when at the establishment of the expensive Army "crammer" in which his parents had placed him, had failed to qualify for the honour of wearing Her Majesty's uniform. "I don't mind the jolting, the bruises, and the hard seats; but, by Jove, I can't stand this continual state of filth. I feel so beastly dirty." And he looked despondently at the rich coating of red dust which covered his hands and arms.

They had crossed several so-called rivers in their route, but they had all been dry; and the mirage in the Karroo, which had displayed before them at dawn a tantalising vision of a broad sheet of placid water, fringed with dwarfed willows, had only made them suffer the more by its cruel deception. They consequently eagerly looked forward to the Salt River, which, the guard assured them, would have at least some pools of water in its channel; for did it not drain the rugged basaltic hills of Bulbheiders Bank (as the eastern spur of the Nieuwveld Mountains was called), whose sterile steepes were too flinty to absorb the dew or rain which might fall upon them, and all of which would, in consequence, collect into the bed of the river?

We had left Beaufort West at nine in the morning; had crossed the Beaufort Flat with its clumps of acacias; traversed an arid, sterile, and naked plain, outspanned for an hour at noon in the "veldt" to eat a hasty meal of biscuit and "biltong," and were now, at six in the evening, looking out for Debenish's Farm, just beyond which was the Salt River.

According to the guard's original programme, we were to have arrived at Debenish's at half-past six, had supper there, and have left at half-past seven; and it was only after his seasoned palate had been liberally moistened by "nips" of whiskey, Cango brandy, and Cape Smoke, that he had consented to lengthen his stay by half-an-hour to give us an opportunity of bathing. This eagerness to become clean was to him an inexplicable enigma.

"S'pose you do wash in the river," he said again and again. "Twelve hours after you will be just as dusty as ever. What's the use of taking the trouble of undressing for nothing?"

All the hopes of the "new hands" were pinned upon the Salt River, for after cross-

ing that we should come upon no river containing water till we struck the Orange River at Hopetown, and that would be three days further on. The number of questions that were asked the guard about the river—Why was it called the Salt River? Was it deep? Was it broad? Was the current strong? Could one take a header?—these, and a hundred different questions, put forward in various guises, made the guard break out into explosions of strange Africander oaths at least twenty times a day.

Hadn't he said, till he was sick of saying it, that at this time of year there wouldn't be more than a few pools of water among the rocks. Would they be deep? No; they wouldn't. Any fool would know that there wouldn't be more than enough water to cover his ankles.

Just before 6.30 p.m. the mules drew up at Debenish's, a farmhouse both internally and externally superior to anything of the kind I have ever seen "up country," and the waggon disgorged its tired and dusty occupants. "The boys," as the English youths had come to be known to their Colonial fellow-passengers, dived into their bags for soap and towels, hurriedly enquired which was the shortest way to the river, and at once started off. I, too, departed in the same direction, for I had not then been long enough in South Africa to have got over that foolish prejudice against dirt, and I still looked upon bathing as a duty, and one that was not altogether unpleasant.

An irregular line of wind-warped African willows and acacias defined in the plain before us the course of the river, and in a few minutes we reached it. At the point at which the road crossed, a dry, shingly bed of sand, grit, pebbles, and larger stones, looking as parched as if no water had moistened it since the Deluge, extended from one bank to the other. The banks were almost perpendicular, except where they had been cut down for the road; and their smoothly swept faces told of the strength of the stream which at times flowed between them; while five or six feet above the dry bed, tufts of withered grass, dead camel-thorn branches, and other debris, tangled in the half-bared roots of the trees which sparsely fringed the summits of the banks, marked the height to which the last flood had risen.

A groan of disappointment broke from "the boys" at the appearance of the dry bed; but, plucking up hope, they com-

menced searching among the rocks up and down stream for water. We walked altogether about half-a-mile up the bed, and then, as the channel seemed to become drier and drier with every yard, I went back to the farm for supper. I advised "the boys" to follow my example; but they were too enthusiastic to think about eating, and continued their search amongst the loose stones and occasional rocks.

About an hour later, as the drivers were inspanning the mules, and we were getting ready to start, "the boys" returned, thirstier, dirtier, and more tired than when they had left the waggon, and hungry into the bargain. They had searched for three miles up the stream; now ankle-deep in sand, now climbing over a ridge of rocks, and now over the splintered and bleached trunks and limbs of uprooted trees; and at last, at a spot where the rotatory motion of pebbles and grit, caught in an eddy under one bank, had in the course of years ground a cup-like hollow, they found some water to the extent of perhaps four quarts. That was all they had seen, and they had drunk that, because they had grown so thirsty by that time, that bathing had become quite a secondary consideration. Such was the Salt River when I saw it for the first time.

Some months later, I again saw the Salt River, but under very different circumstances. I was going southward then, and was travelling in a Cape cart, drawn by two horses and driven by the owner, who was giving me a lift down. There had been heavy thunderstorms almost daily, and the Orange River, when we had crossed it at Salt Pan's Drift, had been rolling on in a turbulent flood that threatened very shortly to make the working of the "pont," or floating bridge, impossible. We had stopped at Philippstown in the midst of a heavy downpour; the Hondeblas was rising fast, and the flat-topped hills of Paarde Berg and Rhinoster Berg had been crowned with masses of dark clouds, extended in sharply-defined horizontal lines. It poured with rain as we left Murraysberg and ascended into the Sneeuwberg District; cold gusts of wind drove clouds of rain-spray into the cart, and caused the tilt to tug and flap as if it were about to break loose; while on every side, as far as the eye could reach, was nothing to be seen but a lowering canopy of lead-coloured clouds and an apparently endless plain dotted with puddles.

It was nearly dusk when we reached the Salt River, and we found, halted on our side of the stream, an ox-waggon, with a span of fourteen oxen, which had arrived a few minutes before us, and which we had seen crawling along the road in front of us for the last half-hour. The Tottie "fore-louper," or boy who leads the leading pair of oxen, scantily attired in a tattered flannel shirt, was standing by the span shivering with cold; and the warm breath of the cattle rolled in misty vapour along the sodden ground. The owner of the ox-waggon, a man of about forty years of age, with a sunburnt face, long and unkempt hair, and a thick, sandy beard, was standing on the river-bank, leaning on the bamboo handle of his long whip, gazing reflectively at the stream; and, inferring from his contemplative attitude that the river had risen, we got out of our cart and walked down towards him.

The scene was indeed changed. In place of the dry expanse of shingle which I had seen there before, a smooth, brown and foam-flecked flood rolled onward between the vertical banks, pitted and spotted in a thousand places by the heavy drops of rain which fell upon its turbid surface; the willows, tossed to and fro by the wind, shook and tottered in their crazy footholds on the verges of the banks; the waning light of evening, further obscured by the falling rain and the lead-coloured sky, gleamed with a sallow glow upon the surface of the water; and the whole universe appeared to reek and stream with moisture. It was one of the most depressing evenings that I ever remember.

The man with the beard looked up at us, nodded, and, shaking the accumulated drops of water from the brim of his felt hat, came to join us.

"Are you goin' to try to cross?" he asked.

"I think so," replied my friend. "What do you say?"

"Well, I don't know this river, so I can't tell what depth of water there may be. P'raps one of you might be able to say?"

I said that I thought I could estimate the depth. I said that I had noticed, when I was there before, that the banks were about seven feet high, that at present there appeared to be about five feet from the top of the bank to the surface of the water, and that consequently the latter could only be about two feet deep. I added that the bed was fairly level where

the road crossed it, and that the stream would not be deeper in the middle than at the sides.

"Well," continued the man with the beard, "I shall be main glad if I can get across to-night, and outspan at Debeniah's, for I 'spect my wife in thar' to be confined every minute." And he jerked back with his thumb, over his shoulder, in the direction of the waggon.

We turned and looked round, and saw a meek and sad-eyed woman, with a white and haggard face, sitting on the driver's seat, and leaning back against the cases and boxes which filled up the interior of the waggon. She was clad in a thin print dress, which, wet and clammy from the drops of water which dripped from the arch of the waggon-tilt over her head, clung closely around her. Pulling at this dress was a child about three years of age, crying querulously in a low key; but the woman took no notice of it, and lay still, with her hands tightly clenched in front of her, and her eyes gazing out into vacancy. But for an occasional spasmodic contraction of the muscles of the face, and a nervous twitching of the clasped fingers, she might have been a statue of white marble, so mute and still was she; and in the gathering gloom of the evening her pale face, with its expression of unearthly pain, stood vividly out with ghost-like pallor from the dark background of the interior of the waggon.

"Poor thing! poor thing!" we both involuntarily murmured.

"It's like the dratted obstinacy o' wimmen, for her to choose such a onheard of time for it," continued her husband, whose finer feelings had perhaps been dulled by a too frequent familiarity with such domestic episodes. "It's playin' it oncommon low down on me, it is. What I am to do with her, with ne'er a woman, nor midwife, nor nothin' around?"

We looked at each other and felt that we were nonplussed, for what did we know concerning such matters?

"Well," at last said my friend, "I've had no experience in these things myself, so perhaps I oughtn't to offer advice. But I think it would be better if you could put her further under the tilt, out of the wet; and could make room for her to lie down."

"Lor bless you," said the husband, "she don't care nothin' for a little wettin'. She and me have often been out o' worse nights than this. Why, she's been a sittin' like

that for a matter of more'n two hours, takin' no notice of the rain nor nothin'. But are you a goin' to cross?"

"Yea."

"All right. If you can cross in your light cart, I guess I can cross in my waggon. If the stream don't carry you away, I guess I can stand it."

"Just so. You'd better see how we get through first. We'll wait for you on the other side, in case of accidents."

As I climbed up into the cart again, I stole another glance at the woman. She was sitting in the same position, with the rain trickling down her face, and the peevish child still whimpering, and pulling at her sodden dress. For a moment I thought of suggesting that we should put her in our cart, and drive her over the river to Debeniah's; but then I did not know if she could be moved, or if my friend would care to have a woman in that state on his hands alone, for there was not room in the cart for three people. Besides, the waggon would cross more safely, and with less jolting than the light cart.

We drove slowly down the rather steep incline to the water, and entered the stream. The horses, accustomed to such work, stepped slowly and carefully; the brown flood swirled around their legs, and broke in a little wave of foam against the wheels; the current was strong, but the water was not deep, and we reached the further side without having had our axletrees under water.

We stopped on the top of the bank, and turned to look at the passage of the waggon. The oxen were started with a few cracks of the whip, and the "fore-louper" led them down to the water's edge. A little delay then occurred, for the cattle were frightened at the stream; but a few well-administered cuts drove them on, the man with the beard clambered on to the seat beside his wife, and the heavy vehicle rolled slowly across the river, the "fore-louper" leading, with the water splashing round his knees.

They had reached the middle of the stream, when a loud cry from the boy startled me. Looking up the river, I saw sweeping round the bend about five hundred yards above the ford, a mass of brown water, rushing onward like a wall. I felt a sickening sensation of horror. Would they get through before it struck them? The man howled, yelled, and shrieked at the oxen, and made his whip whistle over

their heads again and again. They broke into a trot; they would be saved. No—the “fore-louper” let go of the leaders, and ran like mad for the bank; the man with the beard threw himself out of the waggon, and tried to make for the same haven of safety; in another second the waggon would be overwhelmed.

I did not want to see the catastrophe, but I could not look away. Some horrible fascination kept my eyes fixed on the waggon, and the white, lifeless face of the motionless woman. In a moment the mass of seething water was upon them. The oxen were swept from their feet and buried under the muddy waves. The waggon shook and tottered; but it did not upset, it was too heavily laden to turn over, even though it was broadside on to the flood—she might yet be saved. The racing waters surged into the waggon, and leapt and splashed nearly over the tilt, while the struggles of the drowning oxen carried onward by the torrent, with here and there a pair of horns or a head buoyed up by the wooden yoke appearing above the surface, turned it obliquely to the stream.

At last the woman moves. She is stretching out her hand; she is saying something. Good Heaven! What is it? The roar of the flood drowns her words. See! she has taken the child in her arms now. Where is the man—the husband? In my anxiety for the woman I had not given him a thought. The boy is standing near us, shivering on the bank. Coward! if he had stuck to the leaders they might have been got through. Ah! the woman is pointing to her husband. See, that is his head away down there, now the bend hides him from view, he is swimming with the stream. She wants us to go after him; but he will no doubt be safe enough unless he gets staked on a submerged branch; anyhow he thought of himself first, and now we will think of her.

How dark it is getting! Through the sheets of falling rain I can only just distinguish the white waggon-tilt and the still whiter gleam of the pale, despairing face. Can we do nothing to help? No: no man could stem that current even for a moment.

What is that gray object above there, coming down the river? Great Heavens! it is a huge dead tree, and that is a splintered and bleached limb that we see projecting from the water. If it strikes the waggon the woman is lost indeed. How fast it comes down! I think it will pass by on this side. No. it will graze the

wheels and glance off—no, an eddy has caught it; now it swirls round; it has struck. The waggon heels over, slowly, slowly, and then seems to be sucked down by the turgid flood. The child is gone. Look! That is its arm gleaming white amongst the drowning oxen. The waggon is right over, the woman is in the water.

We rush wildly about on the bank. For a few moments we can see a white face floating on the waters, then it vanishes in the gathering gloom, and we can see no more. We run along the bank down stream, in the vain hope that some eddy may sweep her near enough for us to seize her dress; but not a sound do we hear, nor another trace do we see, of the ill-fated woman or her child.

About a mile down the river we find the man, clinging exhausted and half drowned to a bough which sweeps the surface of the water. We draw him out, not without difficulty, and in reply to his eager questions we can only shake our heads. We lead him back to the ford, silent and with hanging head. Not a trace of the waggon is now to be seen; darkness has closed around; and the river flows on like a torrent of ink, amid the sough of the rain, and the moaning of the chill night-wind. We shiver with cold and excitement. Is all this real, or only some horrible dream?

“What is the use of staying here now? They are both dead; they are past help now. Come, let us go up to Debenish’s.”

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcoates," etc.

CHAPTER XX.

It was the fashion among the lady boarders, when one of them went out to any very special entertainment, to test the merits of her toilet by a preliminary appeal to the drawing-room. This was accomplished in various ways, according to the idiosyncrasy of the individual. Mrs. Drew, whom her husband loved to deck with Oriental splendour, generally appeared with a laughing protest that did not in the least hide her innocent satisfaction; Mrs. Moxon, who cherished roundabout methods, manoeuvred to evade the charge of direct intention by conveniently forgetting something at the last moment, and slipping in modestly to secure it, and so getting her meed of admiration; Mrs. Sherrington.

who dressed to please her husband, and was conscious of latent disapproval on the part of the other women, got through the ordeal as quickly as might be, standing in the doorway and eclipsing her limp draperies with a shawl before half their eccentricity had been revealed.

"As for me, I've never anything new to show," said Honoria, when describing this established custom to Tilly. "They know my gowns off by heart, and would detect any shred or patch of disguise in a minute. What a feast you will be to them!"

Tilly had laughed, but she was willing enough to share her finery, and took some trouble to display the contents of her boxes for the beguilement of a wet day. She was at once the envy and delight of the household; her bright beauty and her fair fortune had in them all the elements of a living romance, and stirred the most sluggish fancy; it was a three-volume novel which was being worked out before them, with the added charm that each could end it for herself as she willed, shaping it to a happy conclusion, or closing it in tragedy and gloom, according to her fancy.

To-night, however, when her toilet was most faultless, Tilly refused to submit it to the verdict of the drawing-room.

"I can't. Don't ask me," she said; and she hurried downstairs when the carriage was announced to check Honoria's protests.

"She's fretting [because her uncle won't go with her," said Honoria to the expectant group round the fire. "She wouldn't come in."

"Is she going quite alone?" asked Mrs. Drew, with concern in her motherly voice.

"Quite alone."

Mrs. Moxon, who loved the decencies of life, looked up from her knitting to emit a faint, shocked "Oh!"

"I don't think it's the social aspect of the question that is disturbing her," said Honoria, who saw no disloyalty in discussing her absent friend's feelings. "I don't suppose there was such a thing as a chaperon in Lilliesmuir."

"Some one ought to interfere," said Mrs. Moxon, with icy formality. "It is quite against Madame Drave's interests; it is most prejudicial to her to have such people here."

"Madame Drave can take care of herself," said Mrs. Drew a trifle impatiently.

"Why didn't Mr. Burton go, Honoria? Do you know? What is he doing?"

"As to what he is doing," said Honoria sharply, "he is listening at this moment to that everlasting Behrens. Whether it is that that has kept him from going with Tilly, I can't tell; but I know this, that he's quite changed since I first knew him."

"He doesn't seem very sociable," said Mrs. Drew; "but, then, we're all women except the Major and Mr. Sherrington—who are both too lazy to be entertaining—and those young fellows who don't count for anything with a man of large experience."

"Oh, he's sociable enough—or was," said Honoria, wrinkling her brows as she looked into the fire. "The odd thing is that he is changed. One doesn't expect a man who is so limited as he is to change."

"You can't be expected to account for the behaviour of a person who is totally removed from our sphere, my dear Honoria," said Mrs. Moxon, speaking with a tone of finality; "my dear husband, who, as a clergyman was forced to mix with all sorts of people, used to say that a delicately brought-up lady could not conceive what roughness exists out of her own class."

"Well," said Honoria, somewhat too brusquely—Mrs. Moxon was a person who frequently induced bluntness in her listeners—"I suppose I wasn't delicately brought up; at any rate, I find the man extremely interesting. He is at least perfectly honest; you haven't to creep in at the back door, and go upstairs and round corners to surprise his real meaning."

If this pert speech were charged with any intention, Mrs. Moxon ignored it; perhaps in that remote and virtuous distance to which she had withdrawn, she did not even hear it. Mrs. Drew, who was a peace-loving soul, turned the talk into some other channel, and no more was said at the time; but in the privacy of her own sitting-room—while she reposed in one of the camp chairs that recalled tender reminiscences of their Indian life, with her husband, who was smoking, lounging opposite to her—she reverted to the subject.

"They've let that little girl go out alone," she said.

He looked at her with lazy amusement.

"What a chance for the young fellows! But she's sharp enough; she can take care of herself," he added, seeing that she received this view unsmilingly.

"I wish—I wish——" she began.

"Oh, I know," laughed the Major.

"You wish you could adopt her, and look after her, and finally marry her to that good-for-nothing boy of yours out yonder. Long experience has made me familiar with that wish before you express it."

"You are going a little too fast for me, my dear," said Mrs. Drew, with apparent meekness. "I was only going to wish you would find out about this Behrens, who is always coming here."

"What has he got to do with it?" he asked, staring at her through a haze of smoke.

"Perhaps something, and perhaps nothing," she answered, choosing to be enigmatical. "If we're to marry that pretty child to our boy—as you seem to have settled—it's possibly more important than you think." She laughed at him with frank good-humour.

"Well, I suppose his consent would have to be obtained. It seems to me that that poor, stupid old fellow can't breathe without his permission."

He told her in a day or two the particulars he had extracted from a man at his club about Behrens. These were not many; but they were all to the credit of that gentleman, who had a good name in the City, and was reputed to be a man of means, supposed to have made some lucky hits on 'Change.

"A speculator?" said his wife, with cold disapproval.

"Most men speculate nowadays, when they've any spare cash," he said easily. "I would, if you'd let me, Mary."

He looked at her comically.

"Never," she said firmly. "I would almost as soon see you steal."

"Well," he said, with a smile for her rigid conscientiousness, "Behrens doesn't seem to have got bit. I'm told he lives in first-rate style and has a very handsome wife."

"A wife!" exclaimed Mrs. Drew.

"Doesn't that please you either?" said the Major, with a whimsical uplifting of his brows. "I should have thought the existence of a Mrs. Behrens rather pleasing to you, as it removes a possible lover, and makes that scheme of yours——"

"Pat, you are absurd!" cried his wife, cutting him short. "Scheme of mine, indeed!"

"Perhaps you will say it was mine," said the Major with resignation.

"Nonsense. Do be sensible. What do you think this Behrens comes here for? Do you think he is inducing the old man to speculate?"

"How can I tell?" he said, with easy unconcern. "He doesn't confide in me. I suppose if the old fellow likes that sort of amusement, he can afford it better than most."

The motherly heart that was thus beating with anxious thought for Tilly had some ground for its concern; but the troubles which she feared might gather about the girl's path were those with which a stranger feels loth to meddle. In her simple way she, who in other matters practised a just tolerance and liberal charity, looked with an almost Puritan severity on any lapse from the highest standard of honour. In her thoughts, speculation was but an interchangeable term for gambling; and it was her pride and her comfort that her husband had never yielded to the temptation to dabble in stocks and shares, which so often besets professional men who feel the pinch of a limited and fixed income. It was a narrow view, perhaps, but her husband respected her none the less for it, if he sometimes smiled at the inflexibility of imagination it implied.

Her guess had shrewdly touched on the right solution of Mr. Burton's changed behaviour. Those long talks which Tilly sometimes surprised; those talks studded with uncouth terms about which she rallied him, would long ago have enlightened a less unsuspicious person.

"Bulls and bears!" she would say. "Do you want me to believe you are discussing natural history with Mr. Behrens?"

"Business, business," he would answer her good-humouredly. "What can a little lass like you understand about it?"

She understood little, but she dimly felt that this new passion for discussion, this new desire to be with his friend at home, or in the City, was growing in strength; and a vague alarm and uneasiness, which she could not formulate, assailed her. It rose with her in the morning, and if she forgot it in the whirl of her many engagements, it lurked there still undaunted, ready to claim her first moment of solitude.

She looked at Behrens with a new wonder, and something which might very easily become suspicion. What fascination had he exercised, which so potently rivalled her own? It was a much less complex influence than she supposed. He had but stirred the lust of gain that lies deep in every heart; the man must be simple, indeed, who supposes that the possession of large wealth satisfies all a man's cravings; it is Lazarus with his crust, after all, and not

Dives clad in purple, who is the most truly contented.

Behrens, with a cynic's knowledge of human nature, set about his work with skill; he listened, he sympathised, he did not even appear to advise; he allowed Mr. Burton to imagine that the suggestions and illuminations all came from himself.

There was something almost pathetic in the way in which the older man leaned on the younger; in the humility with which he made his awkward, stumbling confessions. The wealth which had seemed so colossal in Lilliesmuir, shrank to smaller proportions in London. He was still rich, very rich; but he had found that there was something his wealth could not purchase. That was a hard moment. Face to face for the first time with people to whom the ways of society were a fixed tradition, a doubt had come to mar his supreme satisfaction; a doubt which deepened as the days went by, and finally became a constantly galling wound to his pride.

His fellow boarders—though he could have bought them ten times over—showed no amazed appreciation of his wealth; they were good-natured, and would have willingly tolerated and made the best of him, and even found applause for his anecdotes in the smoking-room, but they seemed to think so many other things of deeper importance than money.

"That writing-fellow talks as if books were the only things worth living for, but the writing of them seems to be a poor enough trade," he said with some bitterness. "I'm told he can't make enough to keep a decent coat on his back, and yet he turns up his nose at me! And the young chap—he hangs about his club all day, and think himself mighty clever for doing it. As for the Major," his tone grew more savage, possibly because the Major had shown a readier willingness to be friendly than the others, "any fool can be a Major, but it takes something more than a fool to make the pile I've made!"

And yet, if money would not buy social distinction, what else had he to barter with?

"It's all for the little lass," he ended, with a sudden ashamedness; and then he hinted that, if his presence was to influence her chances adversely, he would take himself off to some remote distance, leaving his "pile" in her keeping. She was pretty enough and quick enough, and she knew about books and things—he thus

vaguely summed up the demands of the polite world: they would not despise her.

It was after one of these outpourings that he first saw a glimpse of an alternative less harsh than self-imposed banishment. No doubt the seed of this idea was deftly sown; but he believed it to have sprung unaided from his brain. This idea was to double his wealth, that was all; the world drives a pretty sharp bargain with the newly rich nowadays, but there is a point where it gives in, and becomes almost servile, where before it was haughty.

Behrens laughed and said there were ways—safe ones—of doubling even a big store; better ways than letting it lie in a Scotch Bank, even if you got current and deposit interest.

"What are the best investments?" Uncle Bob asked eagerly.

Behrens mentioned with a grave face, "Mortgages on freehold lands; good ground rents; and Consols; but if you think of dabbling in Consols, you should get a broker to watch the market for you. It's an odd thing," he added with careless irrelevance, "that the most successful operators in stocks are men who are quite unused to City life."

It was after this, that in a half-accidental manner he took his friend to the City, making jocular apologies for its prosaic rush and hurry. They strolled into the office of a broker, happy in the possession of numerous clients; and there, for the first time, Uncle Bob heard the slang phrases that were soon to have a deeper fascination for his ear; there, too, he first saw the marvel of the tape clicking out industriously its tidings of good or evil.

He stared at first uncomprehendingly.

"What does it mean?" he asked.

"It telegraphs the prices from the House," Behrens explained. He took it in his hand, as it kept falling to the ground. "Consols for money," he read, "100 $\frac{3}{4}$."

Mr. Burton took a chair, and gazed at it with a strange absorption, as it delivered its message with the indifference of fate. "Great Westerns," so much; "Districts," "Midlands," "Grand Trunk;" and as he watched the faces and heard the talk that murmured round him, his sluggish pulses were stirred and his eyes awoke.

Behrens, glancing at him while he chatted easily with his friends, saw that the germs of the fever had already been sown.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dams Durdan," "My Lord Consett,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER III.

"TILL DEATH CLAIMS ONE OR OTHER."

WHEN Adrian Lyle reached his old rooms that night, he found them warm and bright with fire and lamp-light, and his old landlady looking eagerly out to welcome him.

It seemed so long since he had had any sort of home or any sort of welcome, that the strangeness and the comfort almost brought tears to his eyes. When he entered the little sitting-room the cloth was laid, a basket of scarlet tulips made a brilliant spot of colour in the centre, and home-made bread and cake and other dainties were spread in lavish abundance for his evening meal. As his eye turned from these hospitable preparations they rested on a letter laid on his plate. He glanced at the superscription, and his heart fluttered like a girl's.

How well he knew that delicate foreign hand; its small clear letters, and regular strokes! He put the letter in his breast-pocket, intending to read it when he was alone. He had not the heart to ignore the motherly old landlady's kind attentions, or turn a deaf ear to her warm congratulations on his reappearance. However, she ceased fussing at last, and left him to drink his tea in comfort.

Then he drew his chair near the fire, and took the letter out, and broke the seal with trembling fingers.

"DEAR MR. LYLE," it said, "I hear you have left the hotel. Perhaps I may not see

you again, for I am going away from here to-morrow with my mother. But I cannot go away without telling you how grateful I am for all you have done for me and for her. I do not deserve such a friend. Heaven knows what might have chanced to me but for you! These words seem so cold, and it is so hard for me to express what I would desire to say; but you must know what is in my heart, and in all this sad and terrible trouble I think, but for you, I should have died. Looking back now, it seems I always saw you, or heard your voice; and even in the darkness and the cloud and the terror your face looked out at me and bid me hope. And yet, when I think of you—so strong—so great—so good—it seems more than wonderful that you should ever have thought of me at all, still more that you should have taken so much trouble for me, as I learn from my mother's lips you have taken. You know all my history now, Mr. Lyle. There is nothing in my life hidden from you, and the fact that you can forgive me and still be my friend seems to lift my soul up to Hope once more. But, dear Mr. Lyle, I know now that I have no right or claim upon your friendship any longer. I am a wicked fellow-creature in the eyes of all good men and women. I am not fit to touch your hand or listen to your voice. Every day—every hour—this knowledge comes more and more home to me. The very attendants in this hotel look askance when they come into my room, as if they saw all my miserable story branded on my face. Mr. Lyle, I cannot bear it, so I am going away, I and my mother; and this is to bid you good-bye, and to beg you to forgive me if you can, and not to try to see me again. Oh, it is very hard to say that,

but it is my duty, for I have done you only harm, and I can never do you anything else, or be anything but a disgrace to your generous and noble friendship.

"But it is not for me. I never should have accepted it. I see that now. The scorn of others would strike at you for my sake, and I could not, oh, I could not bear—that. Don't think I say this without knowing what I say. A woman who has gone through what I have gone through has lived her life by hours of suffering; and I, though I seem so young, feel old, as no age could make me. I and my mother are happy now, and it is to you we owe our happiness; but we must not spoil your life any longer. We both see that, and so we will go our way, and, though we shall never, never forget you and all you have done for us, we think it is best not to tell you where we are going; only to say that every day we live we shall pray for you, and think of you as the noblest and best man that the world holds. And now farewell.

"GRETCHEN.

"P.S.—I add these lines to say that if ever he comes back, it is best you should know nothing of me, and that I only wish you to say that I never wish to see him again; that now I know him as he is, I could not bear to look on his face and remember that old happy time when I thought he loved me as I loved him; that is all my last message. I forgive him; but I will not of my own will see him ever again; only I hold myself his wife till death claims one or other."

The letter dropped from Adrian Lyle's hands; only those last words rang in his ears as though he heard her own voice speaking them: "till death claims one or other."

And meanwhile he must take up the old heavy, weary burden of life, uncheered by any hope of seeing that sweet face, of hearing that tender voice, whose faintest echo thrilled his heart as never woman's voice had done, or could do again.

He picked up the sheets which had fluttered to the ground; they seemed like sentient things, and there was pain, keen as torture, in their very touch. He pushed aside his untasted tea, and leaned his elbows on the table, and bent his head down on his trembling hands, and tried to think clearly, calmly, of what had come to him.

He did not—he could not—blame her.

She had acted rightly and generously. His nature understood hers too well for even a moment's misconception; but all the same she had taken the very surest way of endearing herself still more to his memory, and of adding a fresh ache to his suffering heart. To have taken herself out of his life; how hard it seemed! so hard that he felt instinctively it must have been right since it bore Duty's indelible stamp; so hard, that as he thought of it—of grey, sad days, of long nights uncheered by hope of any glad to-morrow—it seemed as if he had no strength left to bear his burden any longer; as if he must creep aside to some lonely and forgotten place and there cast it down, and himself beside it, and pray for death and peace.

Minutes passed, but he took no heed, only sat there looking through a mist of tears and pain at the delicate, clear words which had told him his doom so tenderly, and yet so cruelly.

The sorrow and the beauty of that wasted life came home to him, as never had it done yet. He seemed to read the torture of the girl's frank, innocent soul, brought face to face with the degradation she had at last realised. He could do nothing for her any more. She shrank even from seeing him; like a hounded creature, she had chosen to drag herself away into lowliness and darkness, there to suffer and endure till time should ease, or death release her.

That act of voluntary martyrdom touched him, as a child's act of sublime folly sometimes touches hearts that have placed reason on a higher level than feeling. He knew how she had clung to him, trusted to him, thought, acted, reasoned as he had directed; and now, because she feared to wrong his friendship, she had cast herself adrift without hesitation. It was overwrought; it was unwise; but he knew that it was noble; and he knew too that in some sense she shared his pain, and realised the cost of her voluntary sacrifice, though she could never, never realise what that cost was to him.

He put the letter in his breast. Its tender regrets seemed to thrill him with mingled hope and dread, but the echo of those last words beat in his brain for many a weary day to come. "Till death claims one or other." For an awful fear flitted like a pale ghost before him this morning, of that changed and wasted face, and his heart prayed without ceasing, "Not her, O Heaven—not her."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL.

THE next morning brought Mr. Bray to Adrian Lyle's rooms in person, to beg him to reconsider his resolution, and once again resume his old duties.

At first the younger man listened in silence, feeling that he had little inclination for argument and little strength for refusal; but gradually it dawned upon him that if he wished to see Neale Kenyon he had better remain where he was, and that work and occupation were preferable to idleness, and might in some way serve to lighten the length and weariness of days to come. He ended, therefore, by agreeing with the old Rector's wishes, and once more resumed the duties he had laid aside.

How he lived through the days and weeks that followed he scarcely knew. He came and went; he was as patient, as helpful, as unselfish as ever he had been in all matters of ministration and usefulness; but there were times when thought would not be lulled to rest; times when the day's work was over, and he would go home to face dark and lonely hours, or seek his couch and lay himself down blind and sick with pain, groaning in the bitterness of his soul's anguish, "How long, O Heaven, how long?"

Sometimes he felt that to live like this was so unnatural that he could not bear up against it; that the strongest physical force must give way; and he would become hopeless of his own endurance. But taxed as that endurance was, it bore the strain nobly and heroically; bore it for the sake of duty yet to be performed—certainly for no hope that the fulfilments of such duty would ever bring reward.

As he thought of the bitter mysteries of life, he thought also, "she has to bear this pain as well as I;" and then her face would live before his aching eyes in all its changed, sad beauty, and the longing to see it once more became well-nigh unbearable.

But the weary month came to an end at last, and each day he expected to hear that Neale Kenyon had arrived.

He had never been to the Abbey since the day of Sir Roy's funeral. He knew Alexis was there with Lady Breresford, but he kept away, even though the elder lady had invited him more than once.

He never imagined how the proud girl's heart craved for the mere sound of his voice: how easily he might have lightened

those days of mourning for her; with what a leap of pulses she had learnt that he had resumed his duties and was at his old post once more. But it is a strange fact that the routine of life—once broken—rarely, if ever, can be taken up and resumed as of old. And the frank and pleasant intercourse between Adrian Lyle and herself could never be replaced on its previous footing, however much she might desire it.

But she would not acknowledge this yet. She had faith in time, and perhaps in her own power to charm. She knew she must humble her pride to win Adrian Lyle's forgiveness, but she was ready enough to do that now. Sorrow and regret had touched her heart; shame had swept with hot breath across the icy calm and perfect culture of her enchanted garden. She had been moved from the serenity of self-consciousness, and remorse and regret had broken down the very barriers she had deemed invincible, and left her painfully aware that her fate was no more to be controlled by her desires, or bounded by her own judgement, than that of any other fallible creature who owns the gift of life.

She too waited with impatience and resentment the arrival of her cousin. She had resolved to break off the engagement between them, though such an act necessitated her giving up her old home. The caprice that had led her to accept him had borne bitter fruit, and she could not but acknowledge the fact. But for that, this disgrace would have been averted, and Neale might now be free to make that mock marriage a reality.

The cowardice of his conduct disgusted her. She had studied every word of that trial, and her heart had grown hot with rage and indignation as she had read of the sufferings endured by the unfortunate girl, whose fate had hung in so tragic a balance. Of the inner secrets of that story, of her father's connection with it, and the still more painful circumstances which had led to his death, she was happily ignorant.

Two people only could have told her these facts, and the lips of one were sealed by honour, and the lips of the other by shame; so the proud head might still lift itself up with the old defiance, unknowing of the horrors it had escaped.

Thus the days drifted by, and the time was at hand when the arrival of the "Orient," bearing Neale Kenyon's name on its list of passengers, might be confidently expected.

The night before he was to arrive at the Abbey, Alexis received a note from Adrian Lyle, requesting her to ask her cousin to call on him at his earliest convenience, as he had a matter of importance to communicate. Alexis resolved to send Neale at once to him, as she preferred the young man should hear this story from the lips of one of his own sex.

She felt a curious disinclination to see him again. The cowardice and meanness of his conduct revolted her. It had offended her taste; it had outraged her dignity. She felt that she could neither forgive nor excuse it; but perhaps the sharpest sting it held for her, was that on account of it she had for once lost self-command, dignity, serenity, all on which she most prided herself—and had forgotten them before Adrian Lyle. All he had said to her on that night was like a persistent echo in her ear. Never, as long as she lived, could she forget it, or her own after remorse.

Thus it happened that when Neale Kenyon arrived, dusty, tired, worn with his long, fatiguing journey and the haste he had made, his only welcome at the Abbey was the news of Sir Roy's death, communicated by the old butler, and a few curt lines from Alexis saying that she did not feel equal to seeing him, and enclosing Adrian Lyle's request.

Neale read the two notes in a stupefied, bewildered way. The news of his uncle's death was a great shock to him. He had never expected it, and naturally associated it at once with the urgent message that had brought him home. The change it would make in his own fortunes and position did not occur to him so readily as might have been expected.

He sat down in the library in the dusk of the mild February day, and read and re-read those two brief, cold notes with a very heavy heart. He felt instinctively that they foreboded no good, and he knew that he would rather have had an interview with anyone in the world than with Adrian Lyle.

He roused himself at last. There was a tray containing wine and biscuits on the table, and he poured himself out two or three glasses, and drank them off rapidly. "I may as well get it over," he said, and without word or message for his cousin, he left the Abbey, and took his way to the village.

The peace, the beauty, the fragrant English air, the new fresh grass of the fields, the rich brown of the ploughed

earth, all smote his senses with that gladness of nature that is more akin to pain—so sunny, and oftentimes so sad, are its associations.

The sun was just sinking behind a range of distant hills, the dying notes of a bird's song came clear and sweet on the soft spring air. Neale Kenyon heard it with a sudden pang of remembrance, for a bird's song always reminded him of Gretchen—always brought back a picture of blossoming woods, and the ripple of water, and a young girl's face—itsself an embodiment of spring—bent over the wild field-daisies in her lap. He hurried on, impatient of such remembrance now, though he wondered what Adrian Lyle would say when he found that his conduct with regard to the girl was known.

"Poor little Gretchen!" he thought now, half sadly, half regretfully; "but, of course, it must have had an end some time. Those follies can't last. But I was awfully in love with her once. Well, she's changed too, that's one comfort. I'm afraid I behaved badly, but what could I do? She was regularly thrown at me by those curmudgeons. I had to get her away from them, and there was no such thing as getting married in that cursed country. However, as things have turned out, that's no matter for regret. I suppose I must marry Alexis now, and settle down into a regular country squire. Well, I've plenty of inducements here."

The soliloquy ended with a complacent glance over the surrounding country, a feeling that it was not in human nature to regret the choice that had made him owner of a splendid estate, even if it were saddled with a wife so difficult of comprehension as Alexis Kenyon.

"She's thoroughbred, every inch," he mused; "she'll reign here like a queen. I shall be very proud of her, and she must have been fond of me, or she'd never have consented to an engagement. A girl who might have been a princess, too!"

By which reasoning it will be perceived that Neale Kenyon's views had somewhat altered during his absence in India, and his association with that gay and gallant regiment, the —th, to whom all women meant fair game, provided they had the ammunition to bring them down.

With pleasant visions of proprietorship and patronage, of royal expenditure and unstinted enjoyment, he beguiled the long road to the village, and arrived at Adrian Lyle's door just as the sun had sunk out of

sight, and the faint primrose hue of twilight was softly falling over the quiet street and the spire of the grey old church.

He was told Mr. Lyle was in, and the old woman led him to the parlour with many respectful curtsies and congratulations, and all of which were soothing to his new sense of dignity and importance.

The room was dimly lighted by a fire in the low old-fashioned grate, and as the young man advanced he saw a figure sitting beside it, a figure that, aroused by his entrance, rose straight and stern, and with so awful a change on the remembered features, that for a moment Neale Kenyon scarcely recognised the face as that of the man he had known and feared, and now defied.

In silence the two faces looked back at each other, the words that each had framed as greeting seeming to fail them utterly. It was Neale Kenyon who first resumed his self-command. Adrian Lyle leant heavily against the mantel-shelf by which he stood; every limb trembled; the feelings let loose within his heart seemed to stifle him—only when he heard that remembered voice did power and self-control return.

"I have received your message," said Neale Kenyon curtly. "What is it you want with me?"

"What?" The blood flushed in a burning tide to Adrian Lyle's face. "You dare," he said, "to pretend ignorance? I want to know the reason of the lie you told me that night in Rome, and repeated as truth here when we met again. That is the first thing. Afterwards——"

"Oh," said Neale coolly, "never mind about afterwards. If you have only sent for me to go over that old story, you have wasted your time. I am not accountable to you or to any man for my actions."

A blow would not have conveyed deeper insult than those words, nor fired Adrian Lyle's blood as did their insolent defiance. He made one rapid stride across the room, turned the key in the door, and then put it in his pocket. Having done this he seized Neale Kenyon, and with a strength that seemed superhuman, he forced him into a chair and held him there pinioned, and powerless as a child in his strong and passionate grasp.

"Now listen," he said, "coward and traitor that you are! Learn the fruits of your selfish passion, and then dare to repeat to my face that you are not accountable for it;" and in words, every one keen as a barbed arrow, he spoke out the whole

terrible truth of that tragedy of shame; he painted the picture of betrayal—misery—madness—guilt—in colours so strong and frightful, that the young man shrank aghast and trembling from the horrors it represented.

Adrian Lyle had reached that extreme point of suffering when the knowledge of another's pain gives almost mental joy; every line of that shrinking face he read and joyed to read—all the horror and self-accusation of those broken words were sweet as music to his ears.

He did not spare his enemy one detail; he showed him his name and high estate pilloried by the world's knowledge of his secret; the world's scorn of his cowardice; he showed him the blood of his child crying dumbly from its unknown grave; the broken heart, the lost reason of the deceived girl calling for judgement on her betrayer. He told him in words of scathing contempt how every honourable and right-feeling man would regard him now; he wrested away with ruthless hand all self-excuse, all sophistry that would fain have pictured as "a foolish woman," or an "error of youth," the sin he had committed in the eyes of Heaven. He pictured too clearly for any extenuation the irremediable evil he had wrought, and left him weak, and terrified, and robbed of every shred of vindication, a trembling coward, shrinking, with hidden eyes and ashen face, from that towering form that breathed out strength, and justice, and wrath with all the majesty of right, and all the passion of a cherished vengeance. But even now, Adrian Lyle knew that that vengeance eluded him.

He could do nothing; that was the bitterest pang of all. Even in this hour, when at last accuser and accused stood face to face, what satisfaction was gained? None, none, none! so cried his heart.

The fury of his just wrath spent itself for nothing, save the sight of that crushing shame, the knowledge that never again in life would Neale Kenyon lift up his head and defy him with insolent pride; that he never could forget the humiliation of this one hour, or cease to feel its shadow upon the future he had deemed so safe and prosperous a thing.

But for himself—Adrian Lyle's hand suddenly relaxed its hold—his anger seemed to stand forth as a poor, vain thing, unworthy the dignity of manhood and priesthood, and the sacred calling that was his.

He moved away from that shrinking form, and sank exhausted and conscience-stricken into his own chair. There was a long and terrible silence. Neale Kenyon felt that speech was almost an impossibility. What in all the gamut of human language could express the agony of his soul, the humiliation that crushed him to the dust before this man who had read him as Heaven might read him; whose grand and spotless life was in itself an unspoken reproach to the cowardly selfishness of his own!

He was thankful for the darkness of the room; he could not have met that fierce, accusing gaze. His brain grew dizzy beneath the weight of conflicting feeling and conflicting thoughts. He felt stifling, choked; the room seemed closing in upon him. He rose blindly to his feet and stretched his hands out to the darkness and the silence.

"Let me go," he cried hoarsely; "I must have air—I feel stifled. I never dreamt of this; never, as Heaven judges me. I will go to her; it is not too late. I will sacrifice my future—my life, if need be. Oh, for Heaven's sake, Lyle, let me go! Tell me where she is!"

Then Adrian Lyle lifted his face from the gathering shadows, and the gleam of the firelight showed its changed and wasted features, from which all wrath had fled.

"I cannot tell you," he said. "I do not know myself. But this I can say, it is not her wish ever to see your face again, though she will hold herself your wife till death."

In those words that spoke his own doom there was pain so infinite that Neale Kenyon could not doubt their truth for a single moment.

Even reparation was taken from his hands. He felt stunned, and bewildered, and full of struggling fears, each one of which showed more deadly harm dealt by his hand in the past, confronting him like a monument of dread and evil in the future.

"If she is ill, suffering, in want," he cried aloud, "O Heaven, be merciful to her! On me let thy judgement fall."

"Your prayer, like your repentance, comes too late to save her whom you have wronged," said Adrian Lyle. "Nothing can restore what you robbed, in very wantonness of an idle hour. Go your way now. My mission is accomplished. Almost I could pray Heaven that our paths may never meet in life again!"

He moved forwards blindly, uncertainly; he flung open the door, and the light from the passage beyond shone on either face.

As Neale Kenyon looked on him a great wave of pity swept over his heart, and his eyes seemed suddenly dim. Instinctively he stretched out his hand; but then let it slowly drop.

"No," he muttered hoarsely, "I'm not worthy to touch your hand. I know it now." Then his eyes sank, his voice grew low and indistinct. "Would to Heaven," he cried brokenly, "that she had loved—you!"

And with those words he went out into the darkness and silence of the night, leaving Adrian Lyle alone once more with the memory of his hour of vengeance.

A VETERAN GLOBE-TROTTER.

BARON VON HÜBNER, Austrian Minister, formerly Ambassador at Rome, had already been round the world: through the Suez Canal; thence from Australia to China and Japan, and back by way of America; and his "Promenade" is one of the best-written records of globe-trotting that have yet been published. But he wanted to see India, and, therefore, in his old age, he set out again, amid the plaudits of his English friends.

"What a plucky old fellow he is!" he heard they were saying of him at the Travellers' Club; but he took the compliment for what it was worth, remarking, "if anything happens to me, I know they'll all say: 'what an old fool he was!'"

Having made up his mind to go, he determined to do the thing in style. No Suez Canal for him this time; he would double the Cape; nay, he would stop there and try to get to the bottom of the Boer difficulty. So he sailed from Plymouth in June, 1883, and, soon wearied of the long sea passage, with nothing to break the monotony but that big infirmity, Madeira, where, in everything, the Portuguese groundwork shows itself through the thick English varnish.

Like everybody else he was struck with the view of Table Mountain from the sea; the changes of colour—opal-blue in the morning, dull gold in the afternoon, rose-red towards sundown, deep violet after sunset; and, unlike most people, he stands up for Cape Town, with its narrow, winding streets and its houses in Queen Anne style, or even earlier. He has Mr. Rue-

kin's horror of wide thoroughfares running at right angles and rows of tall houses all as like one another as so many drops of water. He regrets the Grand Canal, bordered with oaks brought from Holland; he also regrets the braziers, with which, no doubt, the Mynheers and their wives made themselves comfortable; for in his hotel there are no fire-places, and it is a nuisance to have to wrap yourself in plaids whenever Table Mountain puts on its cloud-covering.

Baron Hübner was naturally anxious to see as much as he could of the natives. Cetawayo was no longer a prisoner; but he was introduced to Langalibalele, whose cause Bishop Colenso so chivalrously championed, and who certainly seems to have got harder lines than he deserved. Lord Carnarvon reversed the judgement by which he had been pronounced a rebel; but as, in the meanwhile the sentence had been carried out, his tribe broken up, and their cattle confiscated, it was thought best to keep him prisoner. Had he been set free, he would naturally have tried to gather his men together, and this would have caused disturbances. "Poor fellow!" the Baron thought, "he was going mad." While they were talking, his features suddenly became distorted with rage, and he cried:

"How long are they going to keep me here?"

His son, who acted as interpreter explained:

"Angry! Very angry!"

No wonder the Baron was sorry he saw him.

"It's the only painful remembrance," says he, "that I carried away from the Cape."

Everything else was pleasant: the picturesque glens of Baines's Kloof; the Veldt, covered in September with the scarlet blossoms of the euphorbia and the pink of the heather; the old Huguenot families (he stayed with one named Hugo, whose ancestors came over in 1693), plain in dress and speech, without a trace of elegance, but equally free from coarseness. Not one of them can speak a word of French; the Government insisted that all settlers should speak Dutch and nothing else.

In some things he remarks a change for the worse, notably in the treatment of the blacks. A century ago, when Le Vaillant visited the colony, all went to one church; now whites and blacks have each their own place of worship. Religion then meant a good deal more than it does now.

Most modern Boers feel like him with whom Dr. Moffatt was to stay the night. At evening prayer the missionary asked:

"Won't you call in the servants?"

To which the Boer replied by turning to his son, and saying:

"Pieter, will you go out and bring in the baboons?"

Moffatt did the wisest thing a man could do under the insult. He read the story in the Gospel of taking the children's bread and giving it to dogs; and when he came to the words, "Yes, Lord, but the dogs under the table do eat of the children's crumbs," the Boer, who had been shuffling uneasily, got up and himself called in the coloured part of his household.

"How the blacks feel to the whites?" was a question our traveller often asked, but the only answer he could get was: "You may as well ask from what quarter the wind will blow to-morrow. They are as fickle as children. Our safety lies in the impossibility of their ever combining; and when a tribe has made up its mind to attack, some of them begin to chatter, and to brag of the mischief they're going to do." In the middle of Pondoland is a factory of some sixty Europeans, living amidst the blacks, on ground bought by Sir Bartle Frere for four thousand pounds; they are not a bit afraid, and (says the Baron) have no cause for fear. "You can always get on with the natives if you have a light yet firm hand, and if you take care to make them understand that they are in the wrong when you punish them. Fail to do this, and they, light-hearted though they are, never forgive nor forget."

The Boer is not so easy to get on with; he likes to keep to himself, and, when other settlers come near, he "makes tracks," like the pioneers in Fenimore Cooper's old novels.

Between King William's Town and the sea is a German colony, with villages called Braunschweig, Berlin, etc.; for as soon as the English appeared, the Boers determined to sell, and a number of settlers from the Fatherland bought their farms very cheap. The Boer is like the ostrich, which cannot be kept in a small enclosure; if you try, he spites you by rubbing his feathers against your wire fence.

Our traveller was struck with the unlikeness of the different towns; in the western provinces they are unmistakeably Dutch; King William's Town, East London, Graham's Town, struck him as very English—the latter with its churches,

and its clerical society, might pass for one of our Cathedral cities—Durban, with its wide, straight streets, struck him as American-looking.

On the voyage to Durban, by the way, he fell in with a Yankee who, having made a big fortune in the war, spent it all in exposing the shams of spiritualism. While "doing Europe," as rich Americans do, he had found out the imposture, and went back, full of righteous wrath, and expecting to be listened to with gratitude. Instead of that he got hooted, mobbed, drawn into costly lawsuits; and, at last, sick at heart and well-nigh ruined, he turned conjurer. "I've done well in Australia and New Zealand, and I'm sure," said he, "I shall do well here. I can work the Davenport Brothers' trick, and the rest of them; and it's much easier to succeed in that sort of thing than to persuade a ninny that he is being duped by a knave." At Pieter-Maritzburg, of which the name reminds us that the Dutch had the start of us in Natal, our Baron got a present of real assegais, not the shams which are made in Birmingham and sent out to the Zulus; and from his host, Sir H. Buller, he heard about a former guest, the ill-fated Prince Napoleon, who was proud of his agility in leaping on horseback, and would always wait till his comrades had mounted before flinging himself into the saddle. This is what cost him his life.

Politically, Baron Hübner did not think the South African Colonies in a pleasant state. Perpetual changes, owing mainly to the changes of home policy, had made everybody gloomy and unsettled. He thinks we change Governors too often. What are five years out there? It takes nearly two for a man to get used to the place; and the last year is spent in packing up and saying good-bye. Above all, he thinks the blacks must not be left to the tender mercies of the Colonial Government: he would make of South Africa a second India; but he forgets that in India there are no white settlers to speak of, and that, moreover, "the mild Hindoo" is much more manageable than the good-tempered, laughing Caffir.

From Cape Town to Melbourne is a long stretch. It took just twenty days, saddened by the presence, among a crowd of sturdy Australians, of a young man whom the doctors had sent on a sea-voyage. "What can a doctor be thinking of," asks the Baron, "to expose a poor fellow to the bad cooking, the sleeplessness brought on by

the ship's rolling, and the heart sinking which is sure to seize an invalid when he lands and finds himself alone among strangers!" Another passenger was a Scotch Missionary, who had written a book, "Christian Missions to Wrong Places, among Wrong Races, and in Wrong Hands." According to him, all the coloured races, except the blacks of Africa, the Hindoos, and the yellow men of China and Japan, are doomed to speedy extinction. "What's the use, then," asked this logical colonist, "of trying to convert them? Much better withdraw your missionaries from them, and send them to work where there's some permanent good to be done."

Our Baron was delighted with the Mayor of Bluffs, which place he reached after a stormy ten days' run from Melbourne. This was a self-made man, who, having failed as a gold-digger, had succeeded as tanner and shoemaker; "while giving me an admirable sketch of the isle, he was carefully examining my boots, and admiring their Paris cut and French material." Round Wakatipou Lake he was struck with the Arctic look of the landscape—snow reaching far down the slopes of the mountains, and below nothing but the yellow tussock-grass; not a trace of the rich vegetation which in the deep valleys forms such a delightful contrast with the peaks and glaciers. The railway to Christchurch, running along the edge of the cliff, seemed almost as dangerous as the viaducts and curves which had taken the Baron's breath away as he steamed from Durban to Pieter-Maritzburg.

Christchurch, with its grandly built University, the hall of which seems as if it had been brought over bodily from Oxford or Cambridge, was just like a choice bit of England over again; loafing in Worcester Street on Sunday morning, he could not realise that he was at the Antipodea. There is this, to him, delightful difference, that manual labour is held in due honour. No need to ask, as John Ball, the crazy priest, taught Jack Cade's men to do, "when Adam delved where was then the gentleman?" You are a "cropper," ere you hire of a squatter so many acres at a very low rent, undertaking to sow them with corn and thus getting rid of the tussock and leaving the ground clear for English grass. You work hard yourself, for the cropper who trusts to hired labour is safe to be ruined; but, if you know how to behave in society, the blisters on your hands will be no bar to your sitting down,

when you have washed and dressed, at the best table in the colony.

A "sundowner" belongs to a lower grade. He is the tramp of the Antipodes; and may be found outside a squatter's house, lying under a hedge till sunset entitles him to the supper and lodging which are remorselessly refused to any one who asks for them by daylight.

Despite the charm of Christchurch, Wellington, with its land-locked harbour like Dartmouth, seemed to our traveller far more picturesque than any of the southern island towns. Everything is of wood, because of the frequent earthquakes. The public offices form the biggest wooden building in the world.

"What can New Zealand want," thought our Baron, "with such a multitude of splendidly-furnished rooms, unless it be to find berths for a swarm of happy employes?" Nelson is the place to which these favoured mortals retire—a very Pensionopolis—where life has none of the feverish hurry of the busy colonial centres.

Kawhia, on the coast of Kingalanda, is, unhappily for the Maoris, six hundred miles nearer Sydney than Auckland. That means that from Kawhia before long, the mail-steamers will run; there will be a railway between it and Wellington; and the native reserve—the last stronghold of the Maoris—will be broken into. The Maori is going, says the Baron. He knows it and accepts his doom, comparing himself with the yellow tussock, which is everywhere being replaced by green English grass. English clothing counts for something: it makes the native more susceptible to morning chills. English drinks and diseases count for more.

"The whites have nothing now to fear from the Maoris; and the Maoris never had anything to hope from the whites." That is how Baron Hühner sums up the Maori question. It is a pity, for they were a fine race. Now some of the tribes live a drunken life by exhibiting their old dances to rowdy globe-trotters. Tawhao, too, the Maori King, does not (the Baron heard) seem at all a credit to them; but "Kate," who steered his boat about the "hot lakes" and lionised him among the geysers, struck him as a very fine and intelligent half-breed; and his description of her makes us join in his regret that there are not more of the kind, and that the native is disappearing—crowded out by the white settler, even as the noble kauri tree is squeezed to death

by the rata, that creeper which the Maoris say grows out of a caterpillar's head. The Maori question, then, is pretty well settled; but the whites have a controversy among themselves. Here, as at home, the land is the bone of contention.

We cry out against lending our money to buy out Irish landlords. In New Zealand, eleven million acres, owned by some one thousand two hundred people, were bought with money borrowed in England, of which not half is yet paid back. No wonder the small men are anxious for land nationalisation, and go in for Sir G. Grey's Bill, which is to do away with freehold and make the State the landlord. The present system, they say, is worse than feudalism.

It is the same in Australia—squatter versus free-selector; the chief mischief being that the "free-selector" is very often only a land-jobber.

At Melbourne, the Baron was struck with the "business-look" of the men. This was more noticeable than even in London. Every face wore the same stamp—that peculiar expression which comes to those whose days are spent in seeking gold—not at the diggings, but in the office and on 'Change. The Public Library, indeed, was pretty full; but, when one came to look, the readers were found to be all ragged loafers. "The pick of the population is far too busy to read."

This devotion to business tells on the Opera. The biggest stars, the Pattis and Neilsens, do not go to Australia; for, since no one will give more than four, or at most five shillings for a stall, it really cannot pay them to make the journey. Madame Ristori, they say, paid her Australian loss out of her gains in America.

With the garden-parties our traveller was delighted; the men seemed still to carry "shop" with them, but the women made these gatherings far more successful than the deadly-lively attempts at pleasuring which he found such a bore in London.

He did not think the Salvation Army a success. The Australian larrikin is worse than our street Arab; and the workmen, whose sole effort is to keep up wages by stopping immigration, seem to side with the roughs and against the innovating preachers. This was in Sydney. In Brisbane, if there are fewer larrikins the air is by no means so bracing. One can hardly believe in the future of a town where, even after heavy rain, "the sky is leaden and the air like the blast of a furnace." Yet

there is at any rate no poverty. A little German farmer told the Baron exactly what Mr. Froude in "Oceania" tells us:

"Our wages are higher than at home; but the great difference is that we live better: meat every day, and as much of it as we like. Everybody, however little he works, can get enough to eat, if he keeps from drinking."

Of the Chinamen he formed a high opinion. It is only the rowdy workmen who want to keep out those who are "the best cooks, the best gardeners, the honestest and most hardworking people in the colony."

Talking of immigration from Europe, he was startled to find the emigrant ships manned by Lascars, with only a handful of white officers.

"How in the case of a mutiny?"

"If such a thing was planned, their Lascar servants would be sure to give the officers due warning. It is always on his Man Friday that the Englishman, who is living among blacks, depends," remarks the Baron.

He saw something and heard more of the Queensland aborigines.

"How much happier for them to have been made slaves than to have had the liberty to die out. They might be improved, for their highly complex language seems to show that they have sunk from a much higher level of civilisation."

It would be more natural to use them as workmen, instead of "black-birding" for Kanakas. And this "black-birding," along with the rage for land speculation, recently caused the cry for annexing New Guinea. The Baron is quite sure that the fear of runaway convicts from New Caledonia was all moonshine.

Probably the unpleasantest voyage a man can make is from Brisbane, round the North Australian coast, in a ship, which, having come from Europe, sailed again before there was time to clear out the bilge water, so that the cabins, swarming moreover with vermin, stank unbearably, and yet the night air was so damp that one dared not risk a fever by staying on deck. The Baron's compensation was that he saw something of the less-known parts of the coast—touched at Thursday Island, where the sharks look at but don't bite the pearl fishers; sighted Booty Isle with its cairn, on which, before the days of steamers, letters used to be left for passing captains to pick up; and passed the great volcano of Bali, whose grand eruption of four months

before were still floating in long white lines across the sea from sky-line to sky-line. Java is very hot; all the whites look parboiled, and all but the unmarried ladies are allowed to dress in a very different style from that which is "de rigueur" in British India. Men in white jackets and pyjamas, ladies in sacques and natives in sarongs; both sexes with bare feet in slippers. But if Mynheer is less exacting in the matter of dress, he is far more careful of his dignity in other ways. No Ilbert bills for him; he never speaks to a native except in Malay, and no native dares to use a European word in speaking to a white man. The Baron is by no means an Ilbertist; he thinks if we lose India we shall have ourselves to blame. Our native army is all right; "the mutiny, put down mainly by native troops, is rather a proof of its value than otherwise"; but we want our prestige as well.

From Java the Baron crossed to Ceylon, where the natives often regret their old Kings who, though they at times fleeced them to the quick, always made allowance for crops failing, or other disasters. It is the same in India; an Oriental would rather pay half as much again in irregular contributions than have to meet the mercilessly regular call of the European Collector.

India, which he came to see, our Baron went through thoroughly, from Madras to Peshawur; but here we need not follow him; his experiences were the usual round of fêtes, palaces, temples. At Conjeveram, he had a grand reception—a crowd of Brahmins throwing flower wreaths over his neck and placing a cardboard parrot on his wrist; and around his bullock-bandy a kettle-drummer on horseback, flute players, and a bevy of Nautch girls. I hope they were not disappointed with the "handful of rupees" which the great man gave them when the visit was over. The Collector at Conjeveram is a native (the place is too hot for Englishmen). He gets a paltry thousand rupees, is a Sadra, and full of complaints of the Brahmins, to whom his exalted position must be gall and wormwood.

After Brisbane and Batavia, India in January seemed very cold, and the Punks, delightful as they were, made our Baron think of rheumatism. One of his great jokes was to "corner" some educated native, who was rash enough to say that "an idol is a symbol of one of the truths of philosophy," or some such schoolboy phrase. "Do please explain," he would say,

"what you mean by a symbol of a truth." This always shut up the native and delighted the Baron, who remembered how, in Paris, in 1851, he came upon a man shouting out to a small mob: "Brethren, let us take our seats at Nature's banquet." "I elbowed my way up to him," says M. von Hübner, and asked: "Brother, what do you mean by Nature's banquet?" He was dumbfounded, and stammered something about the "way the people were fed in America, which so disgusted his audience, that they very nearly stoned him."

Goa, frightfully unhealthy, and seldom visited by globe-trotters, interested our traveller as being a non-British place. He thinks the Goanese Christians so superior to the brethren around, that he is sorry we did not try, before it was too late, the Portuguese plan of compulsory conversion. In Rajputana he interviewed the Maharajah of Jhajpur and him of Jeypur; at Peshawur he met a couple of Afghan Princes. It is not every traveller who has speech of such grandees, or who sees so much of Indian State policy; and it is gratifying to learn that the Baron's opinion of our Civil Service is as high as the most patriotic Englishman could desire; "this miracle, the Anglo-Indian Empire, is mainly due to the energy, self-devotion, tact, and integrity of the civilians."

From Peshawur to Delhi, Agra, Benares, and thence by Calcutta to Nepal and Bhotan. The indefatigable old man got even to Ranjet-Bazar, on the frontiers of Thibet, visiting the tomb of the Hungarian Csoma de Körös, who, like Vámbéry, found his poverty no hindrance to travelling and to storing up such knowledge, that his Thibetan grammar and dictionary are the best on the subject.

Calcutta in March is as empty as Belgravia in September; so, after touching at Pondicherry, a town of idlers, where the "pousse-pousse," with its three coolie-steeds, reminds you of the jinrikisha, our Baron got by way of Colombo back to Sydney, whence, on Her Majesty's ship "Espiegle," Captain Bridge, he went cruising from Norfolk Island, where live—but do not thrive, lacking an infusion of new blood—the descendants of the Mutineers of the "Bounty"; to Fiji, where he interviewed King Thakombru; and thence to Samoa, where a bay, close to West Cape, then chartered for the first time, was christened Hübner Bay. Here he met the "City of Sydney," which carries him across to the Sandwich Isles: and thence

to San Francisco. A run to Canada, and on to Boston and New York, finished what would be an adventurous trip for a young man in full strength; but then one can travel so comfortably when one has the entrée of all the big houses—and diplomatists are proverbial for taking good care of themselves; so, no doubt, the Baron has more staying powers than many who are not half his age.

Such a book is very pleasant reading to an Englishman. It gives us somehow a better idea of the vastness of our Empire than globe-trotters' travel-books usually do. The Baron, when he has done with each country, puts down his political reflections, and argues the pros and cons for Federation in South Africa and Australia, for stopping immigration in the latter continent, and so on.

All this is very interesting. It helps us to see ourselves as a very intelligent and cultured foreigner sees us; and he (by no means a flatterer) sees nothing but good, at any rate in our officials, from Sir C. Warren to the Mayor of Bluffs. Indeed, he finds little to blame except the Pacific "labour traffic," which he hopes will be put a stop to by Chinese immigration. It is certainly not being stopped by the present system of Government inspection.

BETWEEN THE TWO.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

It was nine o'clock one Friday morning, about ten days after Monsieur Adolphe Lacambre had been accepted as the affianced husband of Gabrielle Amboise, nine o'clock on Friday morning—that is to say, it was market day in Saint Zite, and the busiest hour of market day to boot.

In the narrow, ill-paved Grande Place there was a dense crowd of buyers and sellers, struggling for elbow-room, and chaffering and bartering as if their hope of future happiness depended on the economising of two or three sous, more or less. The air was heavy with the odour of richly-ripened fruits, and alive with a hubbub of guttural patois and cackling of poultry. Everyone was busy, everyone was in a hurry, and what with the heat, and the noise, and the crowd, and the difficulty of getting the upper hand in a bargain, everyone was more or less out of temper. At least, not quite

everyone, for Joel Chester was in the throng, returned from England a full week earlier than he was due at the College; and he was so glad to find himself in Saint Zite that he was in a radiant good-humour with everyone—even with the baskets which jostled his elbows and the clumsy folks who trod on his toes. In fact, these trifling inconveniences passed almost unnoticed, for he was looking for Gabrielle Amboise. She always came to market on a Friday morning, carrying a *porte-monnaie*, while old Marie in attendance carried a big basket. They did the bargaining in true Saint Zite fashion, and it generally took a very long while to make the basket as heavy as Marie could carry it, and the *porte-monnaie* no lighter than good management would allow.

Joel, from the vantage ground of his superior stature, scanned the crowd eagerly, but not impatiently. He should see her—that was enough. He had missed her for nearly six weeks, a few minutes more or less at the end of that was nothing. Meanwhile, more than one seductive offer of merchandise was made to him.

"Monsieur wants a fine melon?" called out a white-capped market woman.

"Or a fine basket of mushrooms, or some potatoes?" suggested her neighbour.

"Be quiet, stupid," cried a third; "dost thou not see it is the Anglais who is 'en pension' with the Maliverts? One does not buy vegetables when one is 'en pension.' Tiens, monsieur, see what I can sell you," and she held up a bunch of late roses. "Five sous, to Monsieur," she added seductively. "There is not a bouquet like it in the whole market."

So Joel secured it, and paid his five sous without demur—prices, you see, differ somewhat between Covent Garden and Saint Zite. Then, as he looked up, the sunshine grew more radiant, the noisy market became an illuminated garden of Paradise; his exile was over. At the further end of the Grande Place, anxiously intent on the baskets of poultry, stood Gabrielle, his own dear Gabrielle. It was wonderful, considering the manifold obstacles between them, how quickly Joel made his way to her.

"They are chickens well worth three francs, mesdames," the poulterer was saying.

"You jest, Monsieur," returned Gabrielle, with becoming housewifely gravity, "such a price is absurd, ridiculous. My

aunt told me," she went on, turning to the servant. . . . But as she turned she saw Joel. A hot blush covered her face and neck; then a terrible chill seemed to wrap her round from head to feet. She had not expected his return for at least a week; she had intended to write and have some kind of explanation with him; she had never imagined meeting him suddenly, face to face, and she had no idea what she should say to him.

"My darling!" he said softly, "I have startled you. Forgive me for making such an abrupt appearance. It is so delicious to see you again."

"Mon Dieu!" gasped Gabrielle, "you did indeed startle me. I was thinking of you this morning, and I said to myself: 'He has now about a week more in England.'"

"And you are glad to find you miscalculated? Say it was a nice mistake to have made."

"Oh yes, yes, of course; but you mustn't stand here in the market talking to me. There is no end to the things people will say."

"I don't care," returned Joel, audaciously; "let them say what they like. I have such a lot to say myself."

"But I care," remonstrated Gabrielle. "I care very much, and you ought not to make me uncomfortable. I, too, have things to tell you; but I cannot tell them you here."

"Then when and where will you tell me? When could you manage a walk by the river? Every minute I have been away things have been coming into my head that I wanted to say to you. Can't Marie settle about those stupid chickens without you? See, I have brought you these roses."

"It is very kind of you," she replied desperately; "but I must not take them; there are no doubt a dozen people looking at us who will rejoice in making mischief of this; no, really, I cannot take the roses."

"Mademoiselle sees," says Marie at this juncture, "the woman gives us the chickens for fifty sous."

"Very good," says Gabrielle; but she says it in the same tone of voice with which she might have said "very bad."

Then Marie leads the way to the fruit-seller's. She sees it is no use to wait for Mademoiselle to-day, and she feels that it is very trying to have this young man come and talk to Mademoiselle under the

eyes of all Saint Zite. She wonders what on earth he is saying, and what Monsieur Adolphe would say if he knew. It is rather lucky that he has gone over to Cahors, and is not likely to be walking through the market that morning.

"I implore you," says Gabrielle to Joel, who is still walking beside her, "I implore you to go away."

"I am going," returns Joel dejectedly. "I suppose it's no use doing anything else. I'm sorry I've bothered you. You see, during six weeks' absence from the place, I had forgotten there was anyone in it but you. But before I go, when do you think the children will begin their lessons again?"

"I really don't know. I have heard nothing about it; perhaps they won't have any lessons this term."

Joel was quite puzzled, her manner was so strange.

"Oh, that is too much of a good thing," he answered quickly. "You must insist on their having lessons. It's our only chance of seeing one another."

"I'll see, I'll do what I can; but don't make too sure. See, there is Madame Lacambre. Good-bye."

"Bother Madame Lacambre," said Joel furiously. "Good-bye. Do try and come for a stroll by the river this evening."

Then Joel was left alone in the jostling crowd, with his rejected bouquet in his hand. He looked at it for a moment as if he pitied it, and then threw it on the ground to be trampled out of recognition on the hot stones of the pavement.

"Gabrielle," said Madame Lacambre at the earliest opportunity, "was not that the English Professor with whom you were walking and talking this morning?"

"It was," replied Gabrielle very meekly.

"And I saw him offer you a bouquet. My dear girl, Adolphe would be extremely annoyed if he heard about it. You must remember that a very slight foundation is enough to give a girl a character for coquetting. The man was following you about, and talking to you quite familiarly. I beg you, desire you, to be more reserved and discreet in the streets."

Gabrielle was too thankful to escape without a rigid cross-examination, to resent this lecture. She would have listened meekly to a much more violent tirade rather than prolong the discussion by defending herself.

When Madame Lacambre had said her

say, she closed the subject by beating a retreat.

That evening Joel wandered backwards and forwards along the river-path where once or twice he had had the good fortune to meet Gabrielle strolling with her unruly charges. But on that particular occasion, though he waited for her until the stars blinked down on him unsympathetically, he waited in vain. He did not blame her; even when he grew weary of his lonely trysting-place, he tried to blame himself only for being so unreasonable as to expect her to keep a half promise; and when he had found a hundred good reasons for her absence, he turned and took his homeward way.

This did not lead him, of necessity, past the two houses in the Faubourg Champenatier; nevertheless, he chose that it should, as being more satisfactory to his disappointed expectations.

But the outside view of closed shutters and doors did not prove very soothing, and the dimly-lighted silent road had a sad and depressing effect, as he thought how far and how eagerly he had travelled apparently for nothing but to realise how forlorn a man can feel.

Presently as he sauntered along, he heard steps and voices coming towards him, and, just where a gas-lamp made recognition possible, he met a family party of which he recognised the first group at a glance. It consisted of the Lacambres and Amboises. Behind these walked a stranger to Joel, a short, dark man, and with him a lady, to whom he was talking eagerly, and whose hand rested on his arm.

Joel's heart gave a great jump; the gas-lamps seemed to shoot out flashes of lightning to illuminate the faces of these two—the one unknown to him, the other known so well. At first he almost doubted his own eyes; almost fancied that Gabrielle's face was so strongly fixed in his thoughts that his imagination was playing him a trick. They passed close by him. Apparently Gabrielle did not see him, yet he raised his hat mechanically and then turned to look after her. "Who is that, mon amie?" he heard the man ask. Surely it was a mistake; no man could call Gabrielle "mon amie."

"I think it was the children's English master," came back Gabrielle's answer on the still night air. Joel's frame of mind that night was by no means enviable. For the matter of that, Gabrielle's was quite as little to be coveted. Her one

regret was that she had not written her letter breaking with her old love before she was so far on with the new. It had seemed such a formidable undertaking that she had staved it off to the last moment, and had staved it off too long.

She did not think she could possibly muster courage to tell him to his face that she had played him false at the first temptation. She knew she would have to bear a torrent of reproach from him if she gave him the opportunity of reproaching her; for though she had contrived to justify her conduct to herself, she did not expect to succeed in justifying it to him; he was too hot-headed and romantic to listen to the arguments of prudence and common sense. She had had great difficulty in persuading him to keep his love for her a secret; he would certainly think that she ought to have told him all that had passed between them; to have refused Monsieur Adolphe's advantageous offer, and have set herself, in opposition to her guardians, to insist on a long, weary engagement, which might after all come to nothing.

For how could she be sure that Joel would be true to her for an indefinitely long time, and would work on patiently without regretting that he had so hampered himself? She thought it more than likely that his prudence would have put an end to their romance some day even if she had not taken the initiative.

That was the only possible end to such folly—yes, folly; it was nothing else. It was a pity one had to pay such a price for folly. If it could only be all rubbed out as it had never been! If the final word of the matter were only spoken! He looked so startled when he had met her walking with Monsieur Adolphe. He must have an inkling. Well, he should know all about it to-morrow; if pen, ink, and paper could settle the thing, they should settle it. And then Gabrielle put herself to bed and tried to go to sleep; and after she had tried in vain for a long time, she buried her face in her pillow and wept bitter tears of self-reproach, without quite knowing whether it was her past folly or her present treachery that lay so heavy on her mind.

CHAPTER IV.

SATURDAY was not reception-day at the Maison Amboise, and Joel was not so intimate a friend of the family that he should expect to be received whenever he chose to present himself. Nevertheless,

the day after he had spoken to Gabrielle in the Grande Place, he did, after due deliberation, knock at her uncle's door and ask if he could see Monsieur le Commandant on private business of importance.

The orderly looked surprised. He was quite used to open the door to the English Professor, and to tell the young ladies subsequently that they were wanted in the "salle d'étude"; but to announce him, on a by-day too, as a visitor with important business to Monsieur le Commandant, was quite another matter. When he returned to the kitchen, Jean speculated with Marie as to what such a visit might mean; and Marie took that occasion to tell Jean how Monsieur Shastaire had spoken to Mademoiselle, and offered her roses the day before.

"Ma foi!" cried Jean. "Roses, indeed! It is for Monsieur Adolphe to provide roses, I should say."

"She refused them," said Marie with dignity.

In the meantime Joel, his heart beating in double-quick time, was pacing the drawing-room and rehearsing his opening sentences while he awaited the appearance of Gabrielle's guardian. The Commandant finished his cigarette in the court-yard, and then changed his dressing-gown for his undress coat. The idea of important business with the English Professor did not stimulate his curiosity or hurry his movements.

"You have known me for some time, Monsieur Amboise," Joel began, as soon as the formal bowing and greeting were over. "I need not, I believe, offer you any further proofs than you have under your eyes, that I am a man of respectable birth and education."

The Commandant bowed; not seeing what this beginning might lead to, he maintained a discreet silence.

"Of course I am not at all a rich man," continued Joel, "indeed, if you know the amount of my salary at the College you know that I am rather a poor man."

His listener bowed again, and felt still more in the dark.

"I have mentioned my circumstances at once, Monsieur," proceeded Joel, bracing himself for the great pull, "because I do not want to mislead you or to misrepresent my position in any way. Of course to most people it would sound very rash after what I have just said, if I go on to say that I wish to enter into an engagement—I mean an engagement to be married."

Monsieur Amboise opened his eyes as wide as he could, pursed up his lips, and shook his head slowly.

"If you have done me the honour of coming to me for my advice," he said decidedly, "it will soon be given. Unless the lady has a fortune to supply your deficit, you had better put such a project out of your head."

"Well," replied Joel ruefully, "though your opinion is so decided, and though everything depends on your opinion, I cannot take it at once. The lady hasn't a penny; but she is used to being poor; she doesn't mind poverty at all."

"It is easy for a woman not to mind poverty," returned the other dryly, "as long as poverty doesn't make itself felt very forcibly. She would mind it fast enough when the time comes in which she has to look six times at every sou before she ventures to decide whether it shall go to the butcher, the milkman, the baker, or the clothier, and when she begins to be dunned for debts which she could not help incurring."

"But," argued Joel, "if a woman has been trained in poverty, it must make a difference."

"It can make no difference to facts, my good sir. Food and clothing are facts, so is house-room, and they all mean an income if they are to be enjoyed. As to a woman's training, why, if she has been trained in scarcity she knows what it is, and will certainly try to marry to better herself; that is, if she has any sense. I could give you a case in point. And, as to yourself, if you are poor, you have—with-out flattery—certain personal advantages, by which you might easily win a wife and a fortune."

"That is really neither here nor there," said Joel. "Of course I should not have presumed to come to talk this matter over with you if you had not had some special connection with it. I have scarcely any hope of a favourable answer after what you have said; nevertheless," here Joel's heart beat so that he could hear it, "I had hoped that you would sanction my engagement to your niece."

"I fear, Monsieur," replied the Commandant, "that your misgivings are well founded. Under no circumstances could I have approved of such an improvident arrangement. But there is a further, and even more substantial barrier, of which, I should think, you can scarcely be ignorant. My niece is already engaged to be married

in October to my old friend, Monsieur Adolphe Lacambre."

To say that Joel was stunned by this announcement is to say very little. He had come to Monsieur Amboise fully resolved on making a desperate effort to put an end to an ambiguous position. He had reckoned that, even if her uncle refused his suit, the open acknowledgement that her word had been pledged to him would set her apart in some degree for him. He thought it possible he might call down the anger of the Amboises by telling the secret of their engagement, but he had never for a moment imagined that he should be met by the news that their engagement existed no longer—that it was cancelled by one more definite and more advantageous.

He rose from his seat, and took a step forward.

"It is impossible, Monsieur," he gasped; "it is impossible that she can have given her consent; she has been coerced into saying she will marry."

"Nothing of the kind, Monsieur Chester. It grieves me to see you so deeply pained; but naturally I cannot listen to any such comments on family matters which do not concern an outsider."

Joel's throat was dry; his tongue felt too large for his mouth; his head swam; and he was not sure whether the great tears which persisted in blurring his sight were not finding their way down his cheeks.

"Can I see Mademoiselle for a moment?" he asked. "I must say one word to her. I have a right to ask this much."

"Certainly not, Monsieur." As the Commandant spoke, he rose to terminate the interview. "You are speaking very unreasonably. You must pardon me, but I have an appointment which I cannot delay any longer. Take my advice, and put this matter out of your thoughts as quickly as possible."

And the Commandant bowed his angry and perplexed visitor out.

Late that evening a note was sent to the Maison Amboise. It was addressed to Mademoiselle Gabrielle, and was intended to be delivered with the greatest privacy into her hand.

"MY DARLING," it ran, "what is this that I hear? What cruel pressure has been put upon you to make you go back from your pledged word? I shall not really believe that we are separated till you tell me yourself that you have given me up.
"Yours, J. C."

But the messenger blundered, and knocked at the wrong door; and the note was not delivered in Mademoiselle Gabrielle's own hands. It was handed instead to Monsieur Adolphe Lacambra. Now it is clear that Monsieur Adolphe was not devoid of honour and uprightness; still, it is easier to tell what he did than to explain how he came to do it. He opened and read the note, and then he tore it into a thousand fragments, so that never one word of it reached the eye it was intended for.

Gabrielle herself had been much exercised all the afternoon with the composition of a letter, much longer than the one quoted above, in which she set forth at great length the many good reasons she had had for acting during her lover's absence as if he did not exist.

"Of course," she said, "her affection for Monsieur Adolphe would never equal the passionate love she had given to her old lover; but then the passion had been foolish and reprehensible, while her sentiments towards Monsieur Adolphe were sanctioned by her guardians," etc.

When the letter had been carefully read over and sealed, she carried it out and put it into the post with her own hand, so that in due time it reached poor Joel, apparently in answer to his own.

When this was done Gabrielle felt a considerable load off her mind. Joel was done with now. She must do her best to avoid him, which would be easy enough when the College re-opened; in a few weeks her marriage would put an end to the difficult situation.

Her spirits rose at the thought that she had so far set herself straight; she was more inclined to be affectionate to Monsieur Adolphe than she had ever felt before. But Monsieur Adolphe seemed rather pre-occupied that evening, at times even depressed; and when Gabrielle ventured to ask him if anything ailed him, he told her that he had had a letter which had worried him.

"Nothing serious, I hope?" said Gabrielle, feeling that her fiancé's worries must be her worries too.

"I cannot say," returned Monsieur Adolphe. "I'm afraid it is serious; that is, to someone—I do not mean to myself."

If Monsieur Adolphe's eyes had been large and beautiful, instead of small and uninteresting, Gabrielle might have noticed their plaintive expression as he looked into her face.

"It is a friend of mine—a man I know very well—a person I am much attached to," he continued with a warmth quite unusual to him, "who is in a very sad position just now. He would like me to go to Paris and be with him for the next week or so."

"And shall you go?" asked Gabrielle, somewhat surprised to hear for the first time of a friend who had so much hold on her fiancé's feelings.

"Oh yes, I shall certainly go, with all possible haste. I shall take the early train to-morrow from Cahors. Perhaps I ought to have made the effort to go to-night, but I wanted to talk to you first."

"And who is he, this friend of yours? Have you known him a long time?"

"Yes, I have known him for ages; not so well as I might have known him, but as well as anybody does. He's rather a queer fellow to manage, and I gave him some bad advice not long ago—that's what has brought him into trouble. You see, I must stand by him."

"I suppose you must," replied Gabrielle. "And what is there you can do for him? Is he in money troubles, or what?"

"Well," said Monsieur Adolphe, lowering his tone and watching her closely, "it's an affair of the heart, and a very delicate matter. Naturally I know but little about such matters, and a few weeks ago I knew even less; so I was a bad counsellor, and I am chiefly to blame for the hobble my friend has got himself into."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Gabrielle. "I had no idea you had ever helped with match-making. You do astonish me!"

"I astonished myself," he replied with a grim smile. "I fancied I was doing something so praiseworthy, but I wasn't. You will scarcely believe me when I say that I was totally deceived. Of course in my profession and with my experience of life, I don't like to feel I have been imposed upon."

"But how were you imposed on? I can't make out clearly what the story is or what you have to do with it."

"Unfortunately, I can't tell you the whole story. It wouldn't do to betray my friend's confidence. But I am sure you would pity him from your heart if you knew how bitterly he is disappointed in the woman I—he—that is, I persuaded him to propose to. Luckily he has found out all the mischief before it is too late, and I am going to Paris to break off his engagement for him. What he wanted falling in love so madly at his time of life, I can't imagine. It

will cost him many a miserable hour; but he has some sense left, and he prefers to suffer this sharp wrench than to tie himself for life to a woman who has no idea of truth or constancy."

"Perhaps he is right," said Gabrielle, "but I am not sure. Of course, no woman can be faultless—perhaps he is over severe."

"No, he isn't—no, he isn't," returned Monsieur Adolphe. "I told you he is rather odd, but he's quite right about this. I dare say nine men out of ten would have taken it philosophically. He is the tenth, and he can't."

"I'm awfully sorry for him," said Gabrielle. "I hope he'll soon get over it."

"Thank you—on his behalf. I'll tell him you are sorry for him. I'm sure he will value your sympathy."

"And you go early to-morrow morning?"

"Yes," answered Monsieur Adolphe very sadly, "quite early—so I will say good-bye to night."

"And when shall you come back?"

"Come back—ah yes—yes—I must write to you and tell you all about that—now, adieu."

Then Monsieur Adolphe, who, during his strictly Gallic courtship, had not ventured on such a familiarity, drew Gabrielle's face towards him and pressed his first and last kiss on her lips.

The promised letter from Paris was not long in coming; its contents were very startling. This was how Monsieur Adolphe amplified his friend's story.

"You must forgive me, when I confess that I was speaking in parables at our last conversation. The difficulties I spoke of were real, but the friend was imaginary. The deception was practised on me 'in propria persona.' The engagement to be broken is the one which has existed between you and me. I will bear any blame you choose to lay upon me, rather than fulfil that engagement, since I know that you were already bound by your own free choice when you accepted my offer of marriage. In my eyes, that previous promise of yours renders worthless any promise made subsequently to me.

"A. LACAMBRE."

Beyond this there was no word to show how deeply he was suffering, and how cruelly he felt himself wronged by the only woman he had ever loved.

The Amboises were very angry with everybody—with Monsieur Adolphe, with Gabrielle, and with the English Professor.

It was, however, impossible to give vent to their anger without creating a scandal, which they preferred to avoid. They chose, as their wisest course, to insinuate that Adolphe Lacambre had repented of his hasty engagement, and had found it impossible to give up his bachelor habits; that, perhaps, it was as well, since the match was in many ways unsuitable.

Respecting Joel's unfortunate part in the affair, no word was breathed; indeed, Joel, as Professor of English at the College of Saint Zite, was soon a thing of the past. Before he left the place he heard that Gabrielle's marriage to Monsieur Adolphe was not to be; but he made no effort to see her again. Once or twice, when he longed to look into her sweet, dark eyes, he took her letter—the only one he had ever received from her—and re-read it, until, at last, he knew it by heart. But he never answered it. Finally, years afterwards, it was committed to the flames by no less a personage than Mrs. Joel Chester, whose maiden name does not belong to this story; nor does our chronicle go on to say what was the ultimate fate of Gabrielle Amboise.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

SEPTEMBER.

SEPTEMBER derived its name through being the seventh month from March, with which the Romans commenced their year. The word is compounded of "septem" (seven), and "imber" (a shower of rain). The Saxons called it "gerst monath," or barley month. Gerst was the name formerly applied to the cereal from which beer was made, the term barley being given to it from "beerleigh," the drink made therefrom. It was always the month in which they gathered in the barley harvest and commenced the important operation of brewing and getting ready for winter cheer. The Saxons also gave it the name of "Halige monath," or the holy month, from an ancient festival held at this season of the year.

Up to within a recent period Harvest Home was celebrated in honour of the ingathering of the harvest. On these occasions there was no small rejoicing in the villages, and from thousands of lips might be heard the song of rejoicing:

We have ploughed; we have sowed;
We have reaped; we have mowed;
We have brought home every load.
Hip, hurrah! Harvest Home!

The very personification of this month, when the hunter's moon begins, was supplied by Chaucer ages ago :

Then came Autumn all in yellow clad,
As though he joy'd in his plenteous store,
Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad
That he had banish'd hunger, which to-fore
Had by the belly oft him pinched sore ;
Upon his head a wreath, that was enroll'd
With ears of corn of every sort he bore ;
And in his hands a sickle he did hold,
To reap the ripen'd fruits to which the earth had
yold.

Notwithstanding the fact that September is the harvest month, I find six evil days set down in one calendar and two in another. Both calendars are agreed that the sixth and seventh are dangerous days on which to undertake anything. The other unlucky days are the third, fourth, twenty-first, and twenty-second. Yet, despite these unpropitious days spread over two-thirds of the month, an ancient poet was found ready to sing :

In tyme of harvest mery it is ynough,
Peres and apples hangen on bough ;
The hayward bloweth mery his horne,
In every felde ripe is corne ;
The grapes hangen on the vyne ;
Swete is treue love of fyne.

September boasts very little weather-lore, though one would have expected to find plenty placed to its credit. It, however, "dries up ditches or breaks down hedges," and it is thus invoked :

September blow soft,
Till the corn's in the loft.

The precious stone set down as necessary to be worn in this month is the chrysolite (the yellow sapphire), the peculiar property of which is to preserve the wearer from danger. Maidens born in this month must, however, choose another gem. We are informed by one skilled in such matters that

A maiden born when Autumn leaves
Are rustling in September's breeze,
A Sapphire on her brow should bind—
"Twill cure diseases of the mind.

When worn by anyone else, or used for any other purpose, the sapphire, singularly enough, denotes repentance.

The first holy day, and the first day of the month, is devoted to the memory of Saint Giles, a saint who occupies a place in both English and Roman calendars. Saint Giles was born at Athens towards the end of the seventh century, and journeyed into France in the year 715. He is the patron saint of beggars and cripples, and also of Edinburgh. It is recorded that he sold his patrimony for the benefit of the poor, and on one occasion took off his coat in severe weather to

give to a sick mendicant. The coat of the holy man possessed many virtues, for the beggar was cured of his sickness directly he had donned the coat.

William the Conqueror granted a charter to the Bishops of Winchester to hold a fair at Saint Giles's Hill, on the eve of this Saint's day. On such occasions, the keys of the city were given up to the Bishop's officers, and during the holding of the fair the Church appointed its own Bailiffs, Mayor, and Coroner. In a pavilion erected in the centre of the fair ground offenders of various kinds were tried by the Bishop's officers, and punished according to the enormity, or otherwise, of their offences. Tolls were taken for the benefit of the Church, on all articles exposed or brought into the place for sale, and also on any goods that might be sold within a radius of seven miles. Mr. Morley says : "Foreign merchants came to this fair and paid its tolls. Monasteries had also shops or houses in its drapery, pottery, or spicery streets, used only at fair time, and held often by lease from the Bishop."

Saint Cuthbert, whose day was observed on the fourth of September, was one of the early prelates of Lindisfarne, but does not appear to have been particularly celebrated during his lifetime, except for piety. After death, however, he made up for all shortcomings by appearing to persons in visions and working miracles. His body was taken out of the grave in which it had been deposited at Lindisfarne, some time in 875, and after many removals found a settled resting-place at Durham. On one occasion, when the bearers had to cross a river with their heavy burden, it is recorded that the heavy stone coffin, in which the treasured remains were enclosed, floated down the river and was safely landed. In "Marmion," Sir Walter Scott thus refers to the incident :

In his stone coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides ;
Yet, light as gossamer it glides
Downward to Tillmouth cell.

The eighth of September was a particularly holy day with the Catholics at one time, and is still observed with great religious ceremonies — masses, processions, and the like, in honour of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was first instituted as a festival by Pope Serverinus, 640, in consequence of a revelation that the event was celebrated with great rejoicings by the angels in Heaven.

We next come to Holy Cross, or Holy

Rood Day, September the fourteenth. This day commemorates the miraculous appearance of the Cross to Constantine, in the sky at midday. It was instituted as a festival by the Romish Church on the occasion of the recovery of a large part of the real Cross, which Choseros, King of Persia, took from Jerusalem when he plundered it. Heraclius defeated him in battle, retook the relic, and carried it back in triumph to Jerusalem.

Addressing the Society of Antiquarians in 1831, Lord Mahon gave the following history of the finding of the Cross, which may perhaps prove interesting: "In the reign of the Emperor Constantine the Great, his mother Helena, when almost an octogenarian, undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in search of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Cross on which Jesus Christ had suffered. A vision, or perhaps dream, disclosed the place of the Holy Sepulchre; and three crosses were found buried near it, and that of the Saviour is said to have been distinguished from the others by its healing powers on the sick, and even restoring a corpse to life. The spot was immediately consecrated by a church called the New Jerusalem, and of such magnificence that the celebrated Eusebius regarded it as the fulfilment of the prophecies in the Scripture for a city of that name. A verse of the 'Sibyl' was also remembered or composed, which, like all predictions after the event, tallied in a surprising manner with the object they so happily revealed. The greater share of the Cross was left at Jerusalem, set in a case of silver; and the remainder was sent to Constantine, who, in hopes of securing the prosperity and duration of his Empire, enclosed it within his own statue on the Byzantine Forum. The pilgrims also who thronged to Jerusalem during a long course of years, often obtained a small fragment of the Cross for themselves; so that at length, according to the strong expression of Saint Cyril, the whole earth was filled with this sacred wood. Even at present there is scarcely a Roman Catholic Cathedral which does not display some pretended piece of this relic; and it has been computed, with some exaggeration, that were they all collected together they might prove sufficient for building a ship of the line. To account for this extraordinary diffusion of so limited a quantity, Saint Cyril has asserted its preternatural growth and vegetation, which he ingeniously compares to the miracle of the loaves and fishes."

The Cross discovered by Helena may be traced with accuracy until the year 1575, when it disappeared for ever in a most mysterious manner. A "new" Cross was made by command of the French Monarch, which the people were told was, in divine power and claim to religious worship, little inferior to its model.

It appears to have been a custom to go a nutting on this day, which was formerly a holiday with the boys of Eton College, in order that they might go out and gather nuts, with a portion of which they were to make presents to the different masters. It was ordered, however, that before the leave was granted they should write verses on the fruitfulness of autumn and the colds of the approaching winter.

The twenty-first, on which the festival of Saint Matthew was formerly held, is the next feast day in the month. It was never observed with any great ceremony as St. Mark's and St. John's Day. The only explanation given is that to Saint Matthew's "religious memory, and to honour God, for the favour vouchsafed (both to him and us) by his ministry, this day is observed by the Church's authority."

What was lacking on this day, however, was amply compensated for by the magnificence with which the twenty-ninth, the feast of St. Michael and all Angels—Michaelmas—was observed. Why St. Michael was canonised is doubtful; but he is in all probability singled out for mention as being the chief of the Angels and the Mars of the Christian calendar. Archbishop Wheatley, in his exposition of the Prayer Book says: "The feast of Saint Michael and All Angels is observed that the people may know what benefits are derived from the ministry of Angels."

The festival in honour of the Angels was kept in Apulia as early as 493 A.D., and since then has ever been celebrated by the Romish Church with great solemnity. Ethelred enacted that every adult Christian should for the three days before the feast fast on bread and water and raw herbs, and go to church and confession barefoot. In order that this might be properly carried out, the food was prepared beforehand, and every servant was excused from labour for three days, or allowed to do only what he chose. The penalty for breaking this ecclesiastical law was one hundred and thirty shillings if the offender were a King's thane; thirty pence, if a poor free man; while a servant had the penalty taken out of his skin, by a good beating.

Michaelmas has by custom become one of the quarter days of the year, and in the minds of many its only signification is connected with the payment and receipt of rent.

According to the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1790, it would appear that if some of the good old customs had fallen into disuse, some exceedingly bad ones had shared the same fate. Attention was called in the magazine in question to the singular fashion in which Kidderminster was wont to celebrate the twenty-ninth of September. "On the election of a bailiff, the inhabitants assemble in the principal streets to throw cabbage-stalks at each other. The Town House bell gives signal for the affray. This is called lawless hour. Later in the day the most respectable families amused themselves with flinging apples at the members of the Corporation. The writer had known forty pots of apples expended at one house." At Bishop's Stortford, about the same time, some jolly fellows played the game of follow-my-leader with improvements. Every person they met, of either sex, they "bumped," a ceremony performed by two persons taking them up by their arms and legs, and swinging them against each other. It may well be believed that women kept at home at this period, except those of less scrupulous character, who, for the sake of partaking of a gallon of ale and a plum cake, with which every landlord or publican was obliged to furnish the revelers, generally spent the best part of the night in the fields. This, however, was but a septennial celebration of the feast; the elect of Kidderminster were annually honoured with substantial tokens of their fellow burgesses' regard. It is a very ancient and also a very prevalent custom to have a goose for dinner on Michaelmas Day. Various reasons are assigned for the custom, but the most probable seems to be that the goose is at its best after it has had the range of the reaped harvest field. In the "British Apollo," 1708, the following appeared :

Supposing now Apollo's sons
Just rose from picking of goose bones,
This on you pops. Pray tell me whence
The custom'd proverb did commence—
That who eats goose on Michael's Day
Shan't money lack his debts to pay?
This notion fram'd in days of yore,
Is grounded on a prudent score;
For doubtless 'twas at first design'd
To make the people seasons mind;
That as they might apply their care
To all those things which needful were,
And by a good industrious hand
Know when and how t'improve their land.

At one time a goose was a common present from tenant to landlord on Michaelmas Day, as the following lines, taken from one of Gascoigne's poems (1575) will show :

And when the tenautes come to paie their quarter's rent,
They bring some fowle at Midsummer, a dish of fish at Lent;
At Christmasse a capon; at Michaelmas a goose;
And somewhat else at New Year's tide, for fear their lease file loose.

Macaulay tells us that in the Western Isles of Scotland it was a custom among the Highlanders on Michaelmas Day to prepare in every family a loaf of cake and bread, enormously large, and composed of different ingredients. This cake was dedicated to the Archangel Michael, and had its name from him. Everyone in the family, had his portion, and had, of course, some title to the protection of Saint Michael.

In the West of England love-lorn maidens were once in the habit of gathering crab apples, which they took home and arranged in the loft so as to form the initials of their swains. If these initials were perfect on the succeeding Michaelmas Day, it was considered a good omen that the pair would, sooner or later, become man and wife.

There is a saying in the North of Ireland, that on Michaelmas Day the devil puts his foot on the blackberries; from which we may learn that after this date the blackberry season is over.

In some parts of England a belief is strongly prevalent that the common brake, or bracken, flowers once a year, at midnight on Michaelmas Eve, when it puts forth a small blue flower, which, however, withers and falls off before the dawn of day.

At Oldman's Hospital, Norwich, Michaelmas Day is observed with great rejoicings, geese being served up "ad libitum." The custom was begun in 1249, and has been maintained to the present day.

In Suffolk the country folks say—

At Michaelmas time, or a little before,
Half an apple goes to the core;
At Christmas time, or a little after,
A crab in the hedge, and thanks to the grafter.

I have seen it somewhere stated that until a recent period, the congregation of Kingston-on-Thames Parish Church used to crack nuts before the performance of divine service on the Sunday next before the Eve of St. Michael's Day. The reason assigned for this peculiar observance was that formerly the bailiffs and members of the Corporate Boards were chosen on this

day, and the eating of nuts was connected with the civic feasts. The day was known as "Nut-crack Sunday," and young and old alike joined in the fun.

Mr. Douce, writing concerning the custom of eating goose on this day, says: "I have somewhere seen the following reason for eating goose on Michaelmas Day, viz., that Queen Elizabeth received the news of the defeat of the Spanish Armada whilst she was eating a goose on Michaelmas Day, and that in commemoration of the event she ever afterwards, on that day, dined on a goose." Mr. Brand, however, quoting the above, considers the custom was in vogue long before that time, and calls as evidence Gascoigne's poem mentioned in an earlier part of this article.

According to Churchill the slaughter of the goose at Michaelmas is of divine origin, for he says—

September, when by custom (right divine)
Geese are ordain'd to bleed at Michael's Shrine.

Wherever or whenever the custom originated does not now so much matter; it exists, and there is but little doubt that geese are in their prime towards the end of September.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

BY LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXI.

TILLY had set out for Mrs. Popham's, disappointed at her uncle's desertion, but quite unconscious that by appearing thus unprotected, she was committing a breach of the social law.

She was made aware of her solecism, however, by Mrs. Popham's rapturous delight and admiration of the daring act.

"So your uncle couldn't come." Tilly had taken refuge in this bald statement. "Well, I'm sorry, for I had promised Lady Craven she should meet him; but it is charming of you to come alone! so naïve, so fresh! Lady Craven will be enchanted; it will make up for the disappointment about your uncle; she does so love anything out of the common!"

"Is it out of the common to come to a party alone?" Tilly asked, flushing sensitively, and wishing with all her heart that she had remained at home.

"Oh, not for you!" cried Mrs. Popham, innocent of impertinent intention. "You can do anything!"

Tilly had arrived at the hour at which she was invited, thus further emphasising her ignorance; and as, of course, none of the other guests had appeared, Mrs. Popham was able to keep her admiration at boiling-point, and to hug, and embrace, and wonder over Tilly, as she would.

The girl's finer instinct revolted from this flattery, and there remained an unhappy seed of doubt to trouble her enjoyment; but as the evening wore on, she was able to forget it in a measure.

Fred Temple was one of the first of the guests to arrive, and he made his delight at meeting her apparent. He took the fact of her uncle's absence very lightly, so lightly, that while she was disappointed that no one missed him as she did, she was yet comforted as to her misdemeanour. It could not be so very heinous, since Mr. Frederic Temple made it seem of no consequence.

The Lutterels and the Mildmays too, and even the dreaded Lady Craven, were pleased to be gracious, and threw an ease into their greeting that she had not expected to find there. In Lilliesmuir, a stranger was always treated with a degree of ceremonious stiffness, supposed to imply good breeding on the part of the entertainer; for him or her the photographic album and collections of dried flowers were produced, and conversation was studiously set to the level of his understanding; here everybody spoke of the last thing that had been seen, or done, or said, with no recognition of a world beyond his own little world; and the girls were carelessly friendly; and the young men were—well, the young men were not ceremonious, though they all expressed an extreme anxiety to be introduced.

There was dancing, and as she hesitated to hazard an unknown waltzing step, she sat out most of the time with Fred Temple, who declared, with the easiest unveracity, that he did not care for dancing.

When she got back to the boarding-house, she found her uncle waiting up for her. He wore a very gorgeous dressing-gown, which was one of his latest acquisitions, and he had ordered a supper that would more than have met the wants of the company she had just left. She laughed at him; but she sat down beside him and told him she was very glad to be home again.

"Didn't you enjoy yourself?" he asked, looking disappointed.

"Yes," she hesitated; "I think I did on the whole. There was dancing."

"Well, they can't beat you at that!" he said with conviction.

"Oh yes, they can. The reels and rathspeys of our native land find noavour here."

"You can learn a new step, if that's all. You ask some of your women friends to-morrow where's the best teacher in London, and you get him, if you've to pay him four mes over."

"Oh, it needn't be such a costly affair. It's very simple, I believe. Mr. Fred Temple said he would show me some day."

He looked at her shrewdly, and then he laughed.

"He's a smart chap that!"

"I've learned one thing," she went on with a little conscious haste—"I ought not to have gone alone."

"Did they tell you that?" he asked un-asily.

"No, not in so many words; but there was not another girl there who hadn't someone with her."

"Well, couldn't you take Miss Walton next time?"

She shook her head.

"That would be only doubling the mistake. It's got to be someone old—a married woman, or perhaps an unmarried one would do if she were quite past the dangerous stage."

"There's the minister's widow," he said, alling back on Mrs. Moxon, "she's not dangerous."

"She's an incarnation of all the proprieties," said Tilly with a smile. "I think I'd like to begin with someone a little more elastic in her ways. I don't now, after all, if even you would be considered enough of a guardian," she went on, looking at him as if she wanted to take all his points. "There wasn't any girl here, so far as I could see, with her uncle. You'll have to marry, Uncle Bob, and then we'll be quite safe."

He took her little joke as if it were much better than it was, and when he questioned her further and found that there were some undeniably smart people present, and that the Lady Craven, of whom mention had been frequently made, had invited Tilly to drive with her, he experienced a modest elation, as one who begins to see a long-hoped for goal in view.

Next morning, however, Tilly found the expression of yesterday waiting to begin the day with her. Among the disagreeables that belonged to it was that little discovery touching Madame Drave, and,

as it lingered unpleasantly in her mind, she at last took Honoria into her confidence.

Honoria listened composedly to the recital.

"Oh yes," she said, "I knew that was a little way of hers, and I take care to circumvent it by never leaving anything about that possesses the smallest scrap of interest. I tear my letters into such fragments that the most vicious curiosity would hardly take the trouble to piece them together again. One person who lived here used to write her candid opinion of Madame to her friends, and leave the letters open; but I always thought that rather a mean way of revenging yourself."

"But, Honoria," said Tilly aghast, "do you mean to defend it?"

"By no means; though I believe she would, on the highest moral grounds too."

"She couldn't!"

"Oh yes, she could. She was married to a foreigner, of unknown nationality, and has lived everywhere, and it is wonderful what a queer mental twist some of these cosmopolitans get in the course of their wanderings."

"If it weren't that it would so disturb my uncle, I'd tell him about it," said Tilly with resolution.

"I wouldn't," said Honoria calmly. "She knows how to give a good dinner, though her ideas as to breakfast are crude, and she lets us alone."

"Except when she listens behind doors," said Tilly, with disdain.

"Well, that might happen in other places too, with more disagreeable consequences. Madame never betrays any knowledge of what she may see or hear. There's always something everywhere. In one place where I was they cut the gas off at ten o'clock, and you weren't allowed a candle. If you wanted a bath, you had to order it a day before; and you couldn't offer a friend so much as a cup of tea even if you paid for it. On the whole, I'd rather my letters were read and my parcels examined."

Tilly could not take this philosophical view of Madame's lapses; but her uncle was more deeply absorbed at this time than ever, and she forbore to worry him. Other things helped to make the impression fainter on her mind.

Fred was prompt to come and give the lessons he had hinted at; and whether it was that she was an inapt pupil, or he a stringent master, he found in this plea an excellent excuse for coming very often.

The meetings usually took place in the bungalow, where Mrs. Drew had long ago made Tilly at home; and as the Patent Office was obliging enough to release Fred at three o'clock on most days of the week, there was a sufficient margin before the dinner hour for practical instruction.

The bungalow served excellently for the purpose, since everything in it folded up and packed itself away into the smallest compass.

"It isn't everybody's furniture," the Major's wife would laughingly remark to Tilly, "that you can metamorphose at will into something else. You would never imagine, now, that this was a sofa!"

"It is certainly guiltless of legs," said Fred, "or else it has tucked them up out of sight."

"Oh, they're inside."

The good woman was herself squeezed into the narrowest limits compatible with a brisk and cheerful music drawn from the piano, which was allowed to retain its normal shape, and on which she played unweariedly for the young people.

"It's as pretty as a picture to see them dancing together," she would remark to her husband, "only—I could wish she had a change of partner sometimes."

"Shall I telegraph to the boy and tell him to get sick leave, and take his passage?" her husband asked, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Oh," she said, "you like to put it on me."

"I know," he said, "that if you had had your way, that young scapegrace would have been as much married as Solomon."

"Well," she said, using her woman's privilege to skip to a new subject, "the partner I want for her is much nearer home. I think the other cousin—the real cousin—ought to have a chance."

"That big awkward fellow with the red hands?"

"I don't know about red hands," she said severely. "He is good."

"You always had a kindness for mongrels, my dear," he smiled, admiring her virtue, while he felt no keen desire to imitate it.

The dancing took place at an hour when the workers of the community were supposed to be released from their toils, and could not be disturbed by this frivolity; when Miss Dicey relaxed her pursuit of the murderer, and ceased to track the thief; when Mr. Sherrington gave himself up to graceful repose after a morning of gentle "tampering" with the classics; but it was

an hour when the Bank held John Temple firm in its grip, and refused to let him go free even to dance with Tilly. John's chances were indeed fewer than he deserved or would have liked; he came once or twice at his uncle's invitation and dined with him and his cousin in their private room; but though the fare was abundant to lavishness, it was served with bitter herbs. He suffered for the sins of his father, for though his uncle strove in his blundering way to be just, he yet saw all this new-found nephew's qualities through a haze of distrust.

This was hard on John, for he was a thoroughly good fellow, and, indeed, not clever enough to be a villain, even if he had willed to follow in his father's steps. As he could not see Tilly with any comfort at Yarrow House, he took to haunting its precincts of a morning, hoping that fortune would favour him with yet another chance meeting in the Brompton Road; but Tilly was keeping late hours at night now, and had ceased her early rambles, so that his pains went unrewarded. He took her a second time to Fulham; but the visit was even more disastrous than the first. It was clear that no aid was to be looked for from Jessie, and she finally crushed his hopes by flatly refusing to see her uncle, when, with ill-concealed reluctance, he yielded to Tilly's persuasions and went to Fulham.

He was shown into the diminutive sitting-room, and sat staring about him, missing none of those makeshifts by which Jessie had striven to give an air of prosperity to its shabbiness: the matting which concealed a bad place in the carpet; the curtains which had been turned and returned as if to cheat the sun; the chairs placed in wide aloofness from each other, as if to enhance their importance. His eye, which he had trained to a liking for gorgeous effects, took in all these details. In a corner stood a clumsy, old-fashioned desk, which he swiftly recognised as one that had belonged to his sister Jessie. This token out of a vanished past moved him more than all the rest. He went and stood near it, not touching it; but staring rather forlornly at it. He remembered it as well as if he had last seen it yesterday; the purple velvet covering on the slope that he had thought so grand, and the drawer beneath which had a cunning secret of its own, and in which Jessie had kept one or two letters, a lock of hair plaited into a neat bow and tied with China ribbon; a

faded flower or two; and other bits of womanly rubbish. He wondered if they were there still.

Perhaps he might have been tempted to open the lid and look; but he was startled from any such half-formed resolve by the maid's return with a message from Jessie that she must decline to see him.

At that his heart, which had been imperceptibly softening, closed with a suddenness that half surprised himself. He had wanted an excuse to justify to his conscience his coldness and distrust of John, and the girl's disdainful scorn of him seemed more than sufficient.

He went home in a dark humour. He had foregone a visit to the City, and had lost himself in the mazes of Fulham, only to be turned out of her house by an impatient young hussy who called herself his niece! It was a long time before he would tell Tilly of his visit, and when he did, it was in terms that made her hopeless of cementing a peace. She was troubled and sorry, for she liked John, and would willingly have let him take Fred's place now and then in her walks and drives.

If John, however, was being made to see that he might as well "slack off" his visits and moderate his foolish hopes, Fred was having his innings, and had reason to encourage rather than repress any wishes he might have with regard to Tilly. He was becoming quite another young man from the gay Lothario of a few weeks earlier. His clubs saw little of him; billiards and baccarat, for the moment, ceased to interest him; he had always loved the garish life of town, and now he cared for nothing but to sit within the charmed circle of a crimson-shaded lamp, and read poetry to an audience of one. When it comes to poetry, we all know what is about to happen. The secret of Perpetual Motion remained unsolved; Boots and Washing Machines suffered, and, doubtless, many invaluable labour-saving inventions were lost to the human race, because this young man was beginning to fall in love with Tilly Burton.

There was nothing in Mr. Burton's manner or behaviour to check his aspirations. Uncle Bob, indeed, extended him a marked favour. He was a "likely chap," had always a smile and a gay word, could spin a good yarn, too, and was always laying off about that office of his.

Fred used to detain his host upon the

stair with some scrap reserved for him from the day's doings. "We had a patent for a new process of hanging sent in to-day; we had the biggest bother to classify it. None of our fellows would look at it; 'Suspenders' declined it; 'Cranes' scouted it; we got it smuggled into the surgery department at last, where they hadn't the face to refuse it!"

It may be doubted whether Mr. Burton saw the ironical intention of this mild pleasantry, since—unlike some of his countrymen, unlike most of them—let us brave Sydney Smith for once, he "joked with deeficulty;" but he liked the young fellow's bright face, and his air of well-dressed ease and certainty.

Nothing, and no one, could make Uncle Bob look well dressed, and his manners so entirely lacked repose that he could legitimately afford to envy the youngster in both particulars; besides, it in some measure eased his conscience to find himself able to give a hearty liking to a Temple. It was, perhaps, with some vague thought of reparation, that a new idea slowly germinated within him. He hinted it to his mentor, and finding that it was not withered into premature decay by the breath of his disapproval, he began to cherish it and foster it till it grew strong.

Thereafter Tilly was allowed to wonder and amuse herself over his interest in the dancing lessons and in the walks and drives, when these were taken in Fred's company. He was continually sounding her in what he believed to be an adroitly roundabout way as to the strength of her liking for the young man; he made the clumsiest and most transparent feints to drag him into their talk and to surprise her opinion of him; but when, for the twentieth time, he asked her, with a greater or less assumption of indifference, how she liked him, he was fain to be satisfied with her reply, given with quite unmistakable carelessness:

"Oh yes, I like him. There's nothing to particularly dislike in him."

But when she added with a laugh: "There's sure to be something, though, which will come out in time; there was never a young man who wasn't disagreeable on some one point or other," he was so disappointed, that when she ended her sentence with, "it is only the old ones who are altogether nice," he did not rally, even under the barefaced flattery.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dams Durdan," "My Lord Concessi,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER V. REMORSE.

NEALE KENYON staggered blindly forth into the cool, dark night. His frame was shaking like a leaf; his brain throbbed as if with fever. All around him in the quiet earth, the quiet heavens, accusing faces crowded, and accusing voices cried.

He had murdered the innocent—he had wrecked and ruined the sweetest, purest life that ever Heaven had created. Her face looked back at him now—her face, O Heaven!—with her murdered child in her arms, and the prison taint upon her innocent brow!

He groaned aloud in his agony. When he reached the shelter of the woods he threw himself down beneath the trees, and lived again through the shame and horror of that last hour. Already it seemed far away—crowded out by terrible revelations, by overmastering fear, by resolves wild and futile; but ever and always before his shrinking gaze passed that slender, white-robed figure with her reproachful eyes, and the emblem of lifelong shame at her fair young breast.

"I will find her," he cried despairingly. "I will atone. It is not yet too late. We are young—the future is still before us. The world is wide. We will go where no one knows her miserable story, and my share in it. Every day I live shall be an atonement for these fearful months, and she will forget in time—she loved me so, and love does not alter so soon—she loved me, and she will love me

again. O Heaven, be merciful, and lead me to her side once more!"

Thus he lamented and promised, trying vainly and weakly to anticipate good results even now from past evil; trying also to believe that the effects of cruelty and cowardice might be swept into forgetfulness by a few penitent words—by the claims of an old passion that he himself had forsworn, and turned into a torturing and degrading memory to her.

"I did not mean to harm her. I never dreamt of consequences like this!" he cried again and again in unavailing self-reproach.

Probably not. But he had to learn, as many another had learnt before him, and will learn after him, that it is not possible to determine the extent of an evil once it is committed—to stay its course within given bounds—to limit it to a circumscribed distance.

It has been wisely said that there is a terrible coercion in our deeds—a coercion which may turn even an honest man into a villain, and reconcile him to the change.

Truly, as Neale Kenyon looked back now on that stained past, it seemed incredible that so much suffering could have arisen out of so trivial a commencement. He seemed to hear the echo of his own voice again in the spring woods of Dornbach—"Don't wake Lisschen; come up here and talk to me,"—and from that one incident had sprung the tragedy that had wrecked and spoilt so many lives!

The night grew darker. A soft, fine rain began to fall, and he heard the drops pattering through the leaves, and felt them on his hair as he lay face downwards on the damp, brown earth. Some sense of where he was—of the necessities of his position—came creeping

back in a weak and feeble fashion to his aching brain. He rose to his feet, and stood with his face upturned to the veiled and starless sky. He shuddered as the warm drops touched his brow—they seemed like blood: the blood that his accuser had declared was on his guilty soul, and for which the God of Justice would call him to account.

All his heart grew wild and hot within him, filled now with but one longing, intense as hope of life to the doomed, as hope of mercy to the guilty—the longing to fall at Gretchen's feet and confess his sin; to read pity and forgiveness in her soft, sweet eyes; to take her hand in his; and so face life and its necessities and duties once again, having made such late restitution as honour demanded, and won back his place in the faithful heart that had indeed loved him far too well.

That resolution seemed to ease his pain and his remorse. The tears of weakness and misery that wetted his cheeks were indeed the baptism of a sincere and heartfelt repentance; and so, feebly and wearily, with haggard face and stained, dishevelled dress he groped his way through the avenue of his newly-acquired possessions, a strange and pitiable sight.

He reached the Abbey, and mechanically took his way to the library windows which opened on to the terrace. They were closed and fastened for the night; but, as his hands feebly grasped the outer handle of the door, the curtains within were swept aside, and a face looked out to him. The light of the lamp fell full on its white and delicate beauty. He saw that it was the face of his cousin.

In a moment the door was opened, and he entered.

Alexis gave a faint cry of terror as she saw that spectral, ghastly face, wet, earth-stained, and disordered.

"What has happened?" she cried faintly, as he staggered to a chair, and fell, rather than seated himself in it.

He looked up, his eyes were wild and vacant. He pushed the hair from off his brow in a dim, confused way.

"A great deal has—happened," he muttered at last. "I have seen myself in a new light. Do I look like a murderer, Alexis?"

The girl recoiled. A fear sharp and terrible struck to her heart. What had he done? Had he seen Adrian Lyle? Had they quarrelled? or— She could not put the thought into words.

"Tell me," she cried faintly, "what you mean. Are you mad?"

"Perhaps," he said, and dropped his hands and looked at them with something of the same strangeness in the gesture that had once been in Gretchen's.

Alexis grew really alarmed. She went up to him and shook him by the arm. "Neale," she cried again, "rouse yourself. Tell me what is the matter. Have you seen Mr. Lyle? Have you heard——?"

"Yes," he said, "I have heard—everything. Did I not tell you that I am a murderer?"

"Hush!" she entreated. "You judge yourself too harshly. Of course, there is much to blame, but how could you imagine consequences so disastrous?"

He shook off her hand, and looked at her with scorn, and almost, she thought, with horror.

"For Heaven's sake," he cried hoarsely, "cease paltering between right and wrong. Let us call things by their names, as Adrian Lyle does. I have been a fool, a brute, a coward. If I have not wilfully taken a life, at least I have destroyed all that made its existence of any worth. I have wronged you too, Alexis; but that is a small sin in comparison with that other. Whether you forgive me or not won't break my heart, or pain your own; but she——"

He broke down, and buried his face in his hands.

Alexis drew back from his side, hurt and indignant.

Again she found herself of no account when placed beside the memory of this fair-faced girl, whom her eyes had never seen, but whose fate seemed destined to throw its shadow across her own serene and egoistic life. Again her pride suffered, and her dignity rose in arms at the alight put upon herself. That old expression of scorn and indifference swept away the momentary softness of her face.

"I am quite aware," she said, with her cruellest irony, "that I am of no consequence whatever, in comparison with the claims and charms of this German peasant, whose taste for melodramatic display has dragged an honoured name into the mire of public scandal; but you seem to forget that you have given me a right to resent your conduct, and that I am not likely to brook further insult, because you choose to indulge in a visionary remorse."

The hardness and cruelty of her words stung Neale Kenyon to the quick, but they

brought to the surface all that was best in his weak and unstable nature. He rose feebly and unsteadily; but his face was calm, and his voice firm.

"Alexis," he said, "you always professed to despise the weakness of your sex. I don't ask your pity for myself or another, but at least I will not allow you to insult her in my presence; and I tell you this: that our poor pretence of an engagement had best end at once. You never cared for me, and why you accepted me as your husband I fail to understand; but only one woman in this world has a right to be my wife, and that woman I will seek through the length and breadth of the earth, so only that I may win her forgiveness, and repair the wrong I have done in the past."

Alexis Kenyon's face grew white as death; her eyes blazed with sudden fury; her small hands clenched tight on each other, as she tried to stifle her rage and command her voice.

"Did Mr. Lyle," she asked with cutting scorn, "teach you these heroic sentiments?"

Neale Kenyon's brow flushed dusky red. "No," he cried indignantly. "He does not even know where she is."

Then, cruel and clear on the silence of the room, rang out that slighting, merciless laugh.

"You believe that," she cried. "Ah, fool that you are! He not know; he, whose every hour of leisure has been passed at her side; he, to whom she owes liberty and life; he, the guardian angel of her destiny; he, to whom she owes a debt her life could scarcely pay; he, who loves her as you cannot even conceive love; he not know! Say rather he is too wise to tell you, till your fit of remorse is over; for he, least of any man, would desire to see this girl your wife!"

She spoke with a bitterness, a scathing fury that held her cousin spell-bound. He sank back in his chair trembling, and weak, and speechless. But in his heart he felt she was wrong. He knew that in whatever light Adrian Lyle regarded Gretchen, he had spoken the truth when he had declared his entire ignorance of her present abode.

He found voice at last, and strength too, to do justice to a nature whose nobility he had always recognised, but never so fully and completely as on this night.

"You are wrong, Alexis," he said wearily; "you don't understand Adrian Lyle, though you pride yourself on your

skill in reading character. He is far too noble and far too brave to lie to any man. He told me the truth, and I know it pained him to do it. He has no more knowledge of Gretchen now than I have; believe it or not, as you choose, but it is the truth, and with it, I think this discussion had better end. To-morrow I will tell you what are my plans; only of one thing rest assured. Your father wished this to be your home, and your home it shall be. I will never live here now. Whether you remain or not makes no difference. My sin has exiled me, and I will bear its burden without complaint; but you, least of anyone, should blame me for an effort at atonement. You are a woman, and might surely pity one so cruelly wronged, and who has suffered so much at my hands as Gretchen has."

There was such a ring of genuine feeling in his voice that it might have touched any heart; but if it touched Alexis Kenyon's, she, at least, did not betray it. Her comprehension of the frailties and crosses of human nature told her plainly enough that her cousin was sincere in his remorse; but the sense that she herself could be so calmly set aside made her relentless.

The memory of that hateful scandal swept over her like fire, and burnt up all of sympathy and softness that its pathetic incidents might have compelled. And for this girl—this thing of shame who had slept in a prison cell and stood in a criminal's dock—all the ancient glories of her house and name were to be sacrificed.

The thought stung her like a scorpion. She moved coldly away to the door, and, standing, looked back at the man whom she despised for his weakness and hated for his acknowledgement of its future results.

"You are very generous with the gift that accident has brought you," she said; "but you make a great mistake if you imagine that I will accept from your hands what has ceased to be mine by right. Neither would I for one moment deprive you of the additional glory that may yet be yours when you instal here the partner of your miserable intrigue. You will be a worthy pair to carry out the traditions of a stainless name and an ancient lineage!"

Then the door closed on her, and shut in the indignant face and bitter, humiliated heart in which the arrow of her speech had gone straight home, and in which its poison rankled to the exclusion of more generous feelings.

His very lips grew livid ; a storm of rage passed quivering over him.

"And I wondered once," he cried, "how men could murder women !"

OLD SPORTING LONDON.

MOST suggestive of the changes, or rather metamorphoses, that have taken place in our manners and customs, is the gradual disappearance from amongst us of so many of what are styled "Old English Sports and Pastimes," and the comparatively little enthusiasm with which those that survive are pursued. Sport for sport's sake is almost a dead letter ; the sporting oracles of the Press are ever lamenting the decay of the Turf ; shooting is the fashion, but it is the game dealer rather than the sport which is chiefly considered ; even the enthusiasm of the fox hunt has greatly declined ; and probably the only sport that is followed with disinterested ardour is angling. But it is not the Sports and Pastimes at present in vogue, but a few of those that have become extinct during the last half century, that I propose to touch upon, and that not from a sporting point of view, but as a contribution to the study of our national amusements, as they existed within the memory of many still living.

In the year 1825, one of the sensations of the town was the famous dog "Billy," who on one occasion killed one hundred rats in five-and-a-half minutes, his regular time for dispatching that number of rodents being from seven to eight-and-a-half minutes. This exhibition was held at the "Royal Cockpit," Westminster. A sporting "special" of the day thus describes the scene at one of these matches. "The doors of the Westminster pit were announced to be opened at seven o'clock, but long before that hour, lots of carriages were in the lane, and several Noblemen and M.P.s at the door, displaying as much anxiety and eagerness to obtain seats, as if it had been the last appearance of Catalani in England. On opening the doors, the rush was furious as an 'O.P.' row, and the pit at 3s. 6d. and the boxes at 5s. were filled in a few minutes, while hundreds went away lamenting their disappointment. The performances were about to commence with a capital fight between two bulldogs of great fame ; but the cries were so loud for 'Billy, Billy ! The rats and nothing else !' that this part of the programme

had to be left out. So amidst deafening applause the rats were let loose out of wire cages into the pit, and upon the entrance of Billy, they all huddled together in groups in the four corners. A single gripe from Billy was quite enough for many a jolly fat rat ; the uproar of the speculators, the squeaking of the rats, the roars of laughter, the variety of expressions, and the betting as to the time in which Billy would finish his work, beggar all description. According to Cocker, Billy killed a rat every four seconds."

The Royal Cockpit was, however, rather the arena of the sport from which it took its name than of ratting. The building was in Tufton Street, and was approached through one of the vilest neighbourhoods of Westminster ; about the doors were groups of ruffians from morning until night ; within all was gloom and dirt ; on two sides were galleries, in which were the coops of the feathered gladiators ; in the centre was a raised stage, covered with matting, this, by a curious perversion of language, being the "Pit," where the battles of the birds took place ; the atmosphere was pestiferous from the sickening odour of damp straw, sawdust, and the birds mingling with the effluvia of the Great Unwashed. Yet hither came the cream of the "beau monde," including Royalty itself ; here might be seen the unwieldy bulk of the "bon vivant" Duke of Norfolk roaring out bets upon "the red" or "the yellow," while some costermonger, slapping him upon the back, would shout "I'll take it." Beau Brummel, the Prince Regent, and the Duke of York were frequent visitors, and the future Sovereign entered into the row and excitement with an eagerness second to none. Within fifty years, and until put down by Act of Parliament, cock-fighting was a thoroughly aristocratic sport which few thought of decrying. Even the far more brutal practice of bull-baiting was openly exhibited every Thursday in Tothill Fields at the beginning of the present century ; while bears were kept for baiting until within half a century ; and these "amusements" were no more confined to the lower classes than was cocking.

Between sixty and eighty years ago were the palmy days of the Prize Ring ; all its most famous heroes—John Jackson, Tom Cribb, Jem Belcher—flourishing within that period. Some of these men were received in good society, and not merely among rakes and spendthrifts ; but it must be remembered that, with certain exceptions, the pugilist of sixty or eighty years

ago was a very different personage to the rough who now professes the fistic art. Put any calling, whatever it may be, under the ban of the law, and it will in time degenerate into ruffianism; and that accounts for the degeneracy of the Prize Ring.

Foremost among the professors of "the noble art" was John Jackson, or "Gentleman" Jackson, as he was called. His magnificent form still survives in many a painting and sculpture, notably in Sir Thomas Lawrence's picture of John Kemble as Rolla, for which he sat for all except the face. Jackson fought only three battles in the Ring, and then opened a school of boxing in Old Bond Street, which became one of the fashionable lounges of the Metropolis; and it was considered as essential for every gentleman's son to be taught the art of self-defence by John Jackson, as to go to a public school. Children were initiated into its mysteries at so tender an age that he frequently had to instruct them upon his knees. He was Lord Byron's "corporeal pastor," and every reader of the "Byron Memoirs" will remember in what affectionate, and even respectful, terms the poet writes of him.

But the following story, told by the late Captain Ross, will best illustrate my remarks.

"A man, who played a great rôle as a politician was, in his younger days a patron of the Ring. His wife did not approve of this, and expressed surprise that a really great man, as her husband always was, should take pleasure in the society of such ruffians as prize-fighters. So he resolved to play the lady a little harmless trick. He invited Jackson to dinner, and, when he arrived, said:

"Remember, you are 'Colonel' Jackson, who has fought in the Peninsula and at Waterloo."

"So Colonel Jackson was announced, and was received very graciously by the hostess. He talked well, had a fund of anecdote, and was evidently on an intimate footing with most of the great men of the day. When he had gone, the lady pronounced him to be one of the most agreeable and delightful men she had ever met.

"You must ask him again," she said.

"With pleasure," said the husband, with a merry twinkle in his eye; "but the next time he comes you must receive him as Mr. John Jackson, the pugilist, and not as Colonel Jackson, the Peninsular hero."

Scarcely less popular among the aristocratic patrons of the Ring, though of a rougher type than Jackson, was Tom Cribb. The parlour of his house, at the corner of Panton and Oxenden Streets, was, within the memory of many still living, one of the sights of London. Byron relates how he and Jackson dined there with the famous gladiator; and such visits from persons of even higher social position than the noble poet, were common enough.

When the Grand Duke Nicholas was over here he was taken the round of Sporting London—not incognito, under the protection of Inspector X, as a Grand Duke, with a curiosity to see "the Fancy," might be even in the present day, but with all state and circumstance. He went to the Royal Cockpit, to see a main of cocks fought; and for his especial delectation were arranged a prize-fight, a dog-fight for a silver collar, and a bull-baiting; from the latter he had to take flight rather precipitately, in consequence of the tortured animal breaking loose.

The English gentleman of those days was always ready to throw off his coat and appeal to fists with anyone from his own equal to the commonest street ruffian. If a costermonger jostled him in the street, a ring would be formed in a moment, and dandy and rough would never leave one another until the one had cried a go.

Noblemen have jumped out of their carriages on the high-road to thrash an insolent waggoner who refused to make way for them. Once, when returning from a county ball, old Earl Berkeley, leaving his lady in the coach, alighted into the muddy road in his silk stockings and pumps, in the small hours of the morning, and gave a gigantic "pike-keeper" a terrible towelling, because the latter disputed having been paid when the carriage passed through on the previous evening.

George, Prince of Wales, used to relate with great glee how, on the high-road, he once stripped and had a set-to with an insolent Brighton butcher, whom he soundly thrashed after many rounds.

George Fitzclarence had a mania for sparring when he was in the Tenth Hussars. One day he was strolling along with some brother officers, when a quiet-looking man, with a bundle of umbrellas under his arm, passed by. Ready for a fight, George knocked his hat over his eyes, and challenged him to try who was the best man. The umbrella doctor promptly replied to the challenge, and threw off his coat. In a

very short time this sprig of Royalty found he had caught a Tartar, for he was floored in the first round. He was up to time, however, but only again to measure his length upon the ground; and a third and fourth round followed with the same result, until he frankly admitted that he had found his master. Grantley Berkeley had a bag stuffed full of clothes hanging upon a nail in his bed-room, and under the supervision of his elder brother Henry, he, when a boy, used to punch at this for an hour every night before going to bed, while he had a set-to with one of the stable-boys nearly every day. "If I whacked him one day," says the writer, "he was fresh and lively the next; and though three days a week I knocked his head into the corn-bin, and he had his face chipped like an antique statue, like *Oliver Twist*, he was always asking for more. By this time I had got into such a habit of pugnacious obedience, that if a bear had been introduced and I had been told to do so, I should at once have boxed him." He was once deputed to thrash one of his father's footmen, to whom Henry had taken a dislike, and the flunkey proving too much for him, another servant was called in to finish the battle.

Henry Berkeley was a most expert boxer, and at sixteen put on the gloves at the Fives' Court with the prize-fighter, Caleb Baldwin, and it was said got much the best of it.

Crockford's, the famous aristocratic gambling-house, was occasionally turned into an arena, and after dinner the gilded furniture would be cleared away, and Tom Spring, and Owen Swift, and other noted boxers of the day, would entertain their noble admirers with a boxing match. Sometimes this sport was varied by a main of cocks being fought in the centre of the dining-room.

To a much later period than that from which we have drawn our previous illustrations belong the pranks of the notorious Marquis of Waterford.

A favourite amusement of this "noble sportsman," when in London, was to adjourn after dining at his club, to "The Rookery," in St. Giles's, take the chair at a thieves' and cadgers' supper, held in a house kept by one Joe Banks — "Stunning Joe" as he was nicknamed — and preside over the orgies and dances; in the early morning hire fourteen or fifteen cabs; fill them with the drunken crew and any blackguards he could pick up on the road; make a procession through the streets; stop

at every public-house, and when he was tired of the game set them all by the ears, and in the midst of a general "mêlée" decamp.

One of the best stories told of the Marquis is the following.

One night he was driven home in a cab to his uncle's, the Bishop of Armagh's house in Charles Street, St. James's Square, which, during the absence of that dignitary, he was occupying; but though he told the hall porter to give the cabman half-a-sovereign for little over an hour's work, the Jehu was very abusive. The Marquis, who had turned into a room off the hall, heard every word that passed. Hanging in a closet was the Bishop's House of Lords costume, and, inspired by the demon of mischief, in a twinkling he had donned the wig, lawn sleeves and all, and out he marched into the streets, where the Jarvie was still indulging in the choicest expressions at his command.

"Hullo, you sir," he cried, "is that the language to make use of in the hearing of a Bishop? If you are not off like a shot, you profane scoundrel, I'll give you the rites of the Church with my clerical knuckles."

Now cabby, so far from being awed by this threat, jumped off his box, and, throwing off his coat, declared his utter contempt for the whole bench of Bishops, and his readiness to fight them all, one after another. Making sure of an easy victory, he rushed in, but was stopped by a blow that sent him sprawling. After two or three repetitions of this argument he was fain to take to his heels, the Marquis pursuing him, his gown and wig flying in the night air, and bawling:

"Won't you stay for your extra fare?"

"You may be a Bishop," said the fellow ruefully, as he mounted his box, "but you hit like the Devil."

A Duke's son and an officer in Her Majesty's service, without coats, waistcoats, or boots, running a race down Hill Street at midnight, to decide a wager, would rather astonish polite society nowadays; but this was actually done by the late Lord William Lennox and a Guardsman.

The extent to which betting and gambling were carried in the days of our grandfathers, will read almost incredible. London swarmed with "Betting Offices." Every rogue and vagabond fresh from the House of Correction or Whitecross Street, who could beg, borrow, steal, or scrape together a few pounds, would rent a front

parlour in some back street off a leading thoroughfare; hang round the walls some highly-coloured pictures of celebrated race-horses; nail a few yards of green baize over a rickety counter, mount a big ledger upon it, and call it a betting office. At the worst, he could make four or five pounds a week out of his victims; and if he was unlucky, he moved to another part of the town and commenced afresh.

Every tavern bar was a betting room, and even from the windows of private houses staring placards announced that Mr. So-and-So was prepared to lay odds to any amount, and fortunes were offered to all who would back his selection. A very epidemic of Turf gambling seized upon young and old in town and country: boys of ten years of age were known to make bets at these places, where stakes as low as three pence were taken; and clerks, shop lads, and porters were, in consequence, continually brought up before the magistrates for robbery and embezzlement, to which they had been tempted by these swindling advertisements.

It was the noted bookmaker Davis, who, from the magnitude of his dealings, obtained the name of "The Leviathan," who first started the idea of a betting office; but the originator, unlike his imitators, always acted "on the square." He once paid thirty thousand pounds over the counter in one cheque, out of a loss of forty-eight thousand pounds on the Derby; and on another occasion made a book to the enormous amount of one hundred thousand pounds.

Crockford's was the place for the aristocratic turfite and gambler; and the stories of ruin and crime that were attached to that infamous den, now the Devonshire Club, would fill a volume.

Although not carried to the mad excess it was in the days of Charles James Fox, the passion for "the green cloth," as it was called, was terribly rampant during the first thirty or forty years of the present century. As an instance it may be noted that Lord Alfred Denison, afterwards the first Lord Londesborough, lost thirty thousand to George Payne, the noted turfite, in a single night; and that two blacklegs were heard comparing notes at Crawford's one evening, from which it appeared that they had won twenty-eight thousand pounds in four days.

Leicester Square, the Quadrant, Bennett Street, Bury Street, and Duke Street were full of gambling hells, open to all comers,

with powdered footmen at the doors, gilded saloons, choice wines, and delicate viands, for the reception of patrons; where the cards were shuffled and the dice were rattled throughout the night, and many a man, who entered the portals in affluence, passed out a beggar.

London is, even now, not the most moral city in the world, but we must confess that it is better than it was.

SOUTH AFRICAN SKETCHES.

THE PHANTOM WAGGON.

ON the southern edge of the great Karroo, between Patatas River and Zout Kloof, is situated a bleak and desolate tract, commonly known as the "Spook," or Haunted Country, which is popularly believed to be the peculiar resort of ghosts and demons, who certainly have, in their selection of this locality, exhibited a remarkable want of taste. The supernatural visitors said to have been met with in this district are various, but the apparition most frequently seen is a spectral waggon, which, with phantom mules or horses, and phantom drivers, rushes furiously across the "veldt" in the still hours just preceding daybreak.

The tales concerning this Phantom Waggon are numerous and varied; and on two occasions I have met men who asserted, with every appearance of good faith, that they had actually seen it. On the second occasion, the waggon in which I was travelling was outspanned a little distance beyond the farm-house at Patatas River. It was a pitch-dark night; a low, moaning breeze, which struck rather cold, swept across the dreary plain, and we, the passengers, were gathered round a glowing fire of ox-chips, talking and smoking. At a distance of some six hundred yards was another outspan. The shadows of the men sitting or moving round its fire were flung in grotesque and gigantic shapes across the zone of stony ground lighted up by the flickering flames; while, borne gently down to our ears, and softened and beautified by the distance and the sobbing of the wind, came the strains of a violin, not at all badly played, and the voices of three or four white men singing some pathetic Christy Minstrel air.

Probably, it was the opaque darkness of the night, which the eye sought vainly to penetrate; the wailing sound of the light wind; the sense of being lost, as

it were, in the dense blackness and the vast solitude of the plain, coupled with the half-awakened sadness caused by the distant music, which seemed to recall some dim recollection of a past longing or a past sorrow, and that caused the conversation, already carried on in low tones, to turn upon death-omens, ghosts, and all the stock-in-trade generally of the supernatural.

An Englishman of middle age led the way by narrating a curious coincidence of which he had heard—of thirteen people having sat down to dinner on a Christmas Day, and of the man who rose first from the table having died before twelve months had elapsed. All of us had heard of this old superstition, and we began to discuss the relative probability as to one person out of any given thirteen dying before a given time; but a bagman from Manchester, who was known to us by the name of Simpson, but whose Mosaic features betrayed his nationality under the disguise of an assumed Anglo-Saxon cognomen, was full of high-souled scorn and derision at the idea of anyone believing for a moment in any such ridiculous nonsense.

He proceeded to cross-examine the Englishman.

"Was you present at thish dinner?" he inquired.

"No, I wasn't there."

"Then how do you know anything about it?"

"A brother of mine, who was at the dinner, told me."

"How do you know he wasn't telling you a lie?"

"My brothers don't lie."

"Then they don't take after you," replied the bagman, bursting into a loud but forced laugh of incredulity.

We became really afraid that unpleasantness would occur, for the Englishman did not appear provided with any further stock of patience, while the bagman seemed to be entirely unconscious of his critical situation.

"If you mean to call me a liar," said the Englishman, "say so, and I'll know what to do."

We trembled at the prospect of a passage of arms between these two antagonists at this hour of the night. We were lazy, drowsy, and, moreover, subdued by the surroundings which I have described. We did not want to be disturbed by any pugilistic encounter. Fortunately the peace was preserved by an interposition.

"I can tell you of something queer, that you can't explain away, and which I saw with my own eyes," interposed a man of about fifty years of age, whose beard, of a red-brown hue, was plentifully streaked with grey, and whom from his attire—for he wore the usual felt hat and moleskins of the Colony—we supposed to be an Afri-cander. We knew him in the waggon by the name of Lutterodt; but that might, or might not, have been his real name.

Being all desirous of peace, and glad of this diversion, we eagerly pressed our man to unfold his tale. In the clamour of voices, that of the bagman, if indeed he was enunciating any retort to his adversary, was drowned, and in the calm of a restored harmony our Afri-cander friend held forth. I cannot guarantee that the following are the actual words he used. In fact, I am not acquainted with shorthand, and I did not attempt to take down his narrative as it fell from his lips, but I am certain that the gist of it is preserved in what follows.

"A matter of some eight years ago, I was travelling in the post-cart from Ceres to Beaufort West. It was in November, towards the end of it, as far as I remember. There was in the cart, besides me and the driver, old Serrurier of Conrader's Fontein, and a Cape Town man who had come up to Ceres from Darling Bridge. I had the seat next the driver; the other two sat behind. The driver was Anthony de Heer.

"We had some slight accident to one of the wheels, and at nightfall we stopped at this very place, Patatas River, to patch it up. At about three next morning we started again. It was a bright starlight night, and bitterly cold. We wrapped ourselves in our 'karosses,' and went off into a half-doze in the cart, being wakened up every now and then as we were swung from side to side when jolting over the stones and ruts. We were soon in the middle of the Spook country, which we shall pass through to-morrow.

"We were all nodding in our seats, dreaming no doubt of comfortable beds, when the cart suddenly stopped short, nearly throwing us out. We thought there was something in the way, and looked ahead; but there was nothing to be seen. 'What's up?' I asked of Anthony, who was cursing and swearing at the horses. 'Hanged if I know,' said he. 'I didn't pull them up. They stopped dead short of themselves.' I held the reins while he got down to see if there

was anything wrong with the harness, and then, as it was found all right, we got ready to start again. At first the horses wouldn't move, and kept backing; but a few cuts with the whip brought them to their senses, and off we went once more.

"We went along for some half-a-mile all right, when suddenly they stopped short again. Anthony began cursing, when I thought I heard the sound of wheels, and stopped him to listen. True enough, over to our right we heard the cracking of a whip, the cries of a driver, and the rumble of wheels coming fast towards us. 'There's a waggon coming,' said I; 'you'd best draw to one side, or they'll run into us.' 'It's off the road,' said Anthony. 'The road goes straight ahead, and the waggon's over here to our right.'

"True enough it was, as our ears told us. It was coming along at a furious rate on a dark night, over stones, rocks, and bushes, where a man could hardly drive forty yards in the daytime, out of a walk, without smashing something. 'Runaway, p'raps,' said the man from Cape Town. Presently we saw the white waggon-tilt looming up in the gloom, to our right a good deal, but still to our front. It seemed to be coming straight towards us. The noise it made was something astonishing—it was like a thunder-clap echoing amongst the hills.

"In a few seconds we could see the mules, ten, twelve, fourteen of them, with heads down, tearing along at full gallop, and a mass of foam and steam. They were about a hundred yards off, and coming straight at us. 'Where are you going to?' shouted Anthony. A loud yell came from the waggon, and then followed a burst of devilish laughter that made my blood run cold. Anthony lashed the horses to make them move out of the way, but they would not stir, and stood there trembling and snorting, with their manes bristling like a hyena's. In another second the waggon would be into us. We sprang out like lightning, and ran back.

"On came the leading mules. Their heads nearly touched the cart when they swerved off, and the whole span, with the waggon leaping after them, shot past us by a hair's breadth. As they went by, there came the coldest blast of air that I have ever felt. It made us feel as if our blood had been turned into ice; and, just as the waggon was passing us, the driver turned his head round to us and pushed back his hat. Good Heavens! what a face was

that we saw! It was no Tottie who was driving. It was the face of a white man, ghastly pale, like that of a corpse, and the jaws were tied up with a white cloth. The eyes seemed to look us through and through. Just as the waggon passed came another yell of devilish laughter from inside the waggon, and then was dead silence. All in a second the crash, rattle, and rumble ceased, and not a sound was to be heard. At the same moment the waggon disappeared.

"We looked at each other astounded. Anthony was shivering. 'It's the Phantom Waggon of the Spoek,' said he. 'I've heard of it often enough; but never expected to see it.' We said that was nonsense, that the waggon had probably suddenly stopped, and we ran into the veldt to look for it; but not a trace of it could we discover anywhere. We were coming back to where we had left Anthony with the cart, when a bright light suddenly shone out a little way off, and we saw a camp fire, with two men sitting by it. We ran towards it, thinking to clear up the mystery, when the two men got up, turned their ghastly faces on us, and disappeared. At the same moment the fire went out. We felt the ground; but it was quite cold, and there were no embers, ashes, or any traces of a fire at all.

"We went back to the cart. Anthony seemed very gloomy. We knew the reason, for we knew the old story about the Phantom Waggon. It is that it charges right down upon any cart, or vehicle of any kind it comes across. If no one challenges it, it smashes right into it, and all inside are doomed; but if any one challenges, that man saves the others at the expense of himself, for he is bound to die within a week. We tried to cheer Anthony up, telling him it was all humbug, though after what we had just seen we didn't really think so, and said that what we had seen was very likely a spectral illusion of the same kind as I have heard the Hartz demon described to be. But we were half-hearted about it, and when Anthony said that no spectral illusion caused by shadows on a mist, or anything of that kind, could make the noises we had heard, even if the morning had been misty, which it wasn't, we felt there was nothing more to be said. Poor fellow, he felt very bad about it, thinking of his wife and children at Ceres whom he had only left the morning before."

Here the narrator paused.

"Did the driver pull through after all?" said some one.

"No. Poor Anthony! On the back journey he somehow had an accident in Hottentot's Kloof. It was a strange thing, for he was known to be a good and careful driver. He and the cart and horses were found all smashed to atoms at the bottom of a ravine. He must have driven right over the precipice."

A solemn silence followed the termination of the story. It was interrupted by the Hebrew bagman, Simpson.

"You don't suppose we're going to believe such a lot of bosh as that, do you?" he enquired.

"I didn't tell the story for your benefit," replied Lutterodt. "You can believe it or not, as you like. But what I've said I'm prepared to swear to."

"Been on the]booze, p'raps—going to have D.T.," continued the bagman.

No reply.

"I should have liked to have been there," he remarked to the circle generally. "I'd have liked to try the effect of a leaden pill out of this little persuader on the pasty-faced driver of the mules," and he drew from his inner breast-pocket a] small revolver.

"I wonder you carry weapons," interposed the Englishman. "You seem so extra plucky you might have got along without them, especially as other folk do."

"Ah!" said the bagman. "You see I ain't a beggarly digger. I've got property to defend."

The Englishman sprang to his feet. He stigmatised the bagman as a condemned, unbelieving Jew, desired him to come on and be blanked, and at the same time promised that, should he respond to this invitation, he would proceed to place him in a condition in which he would at once require the services of a skilled oculist and an experienced dentist. We at once interposed. To do the bagman justice, he did not appear at all inclined to disturb the harmony of the outspan by a resort to a vulgar trial of strength; so we desired him to go and sleep in the waggon, and to leave us alone. So he went, soliloquising aloud about "bosh," "set of old women," "believe in any humbug."

When he had gone we discussed the story, appealing to the narrator on various points. We gathered from him that no mortal eye had ever looked upon the contents of the Phantom Waggon; that it was supposed by some to contain a complement

of demons let loose on temporary duty from below; while others were of opinion that it contained the spectres of those who had been destroyed by it; and who, exulting in the prospect of other unfortunates meeting with the fate that had been theirs, gave vent to the mocking and malignant laughter which was always heard. Then as one after the other yawned, and pipe after pipe fell from relaxing lips, conversation gradually ceased, and, wrapped in our "karosses" or rugs, we laid with our feet to the fire, and slept as soundly on the hard ground as if we had been couched on feather beds.

About three in the morning the guard came and shook us up. We struggled to our feet, yawned, stretched, grumbled at being disturbed, and stumbled towards the waggon, into which we climbed. The night wind seemed colder than ever, and we huddled together and endeavoured to renew our broken slumbers. On we went over the dark and desolate plain. Strange sounds and cries came up from the dim distance, the cries of night birds, or of nocturnal animals prowling over the veldt.

Said Lutterodt, "We are in the Spook now."

"All bosh," muttered the bagman.

After about an hour a pale grey light appeared in the distant east; the stars grew dim, and the light breeze freshened and grew colder. Suddenly we heard in front of us the distant cracking of a whip, and the sound of wheels. We looked at each other, thinking of the story of the previous night.

"It was just about here," said Lutterodt in a sepulchral voice, "that the Phantom Waggon came on us."

I looked at the bagman. He was very pale. He tried to laugh; but the lips would only form a sickly smile. The Englishman and Lutterodt exchanged glances.

"Look here, gentlemen," said the latter, "one of us has got to challenge, or we are all lost. Who will volunteer to do it?"

No answer.

"As you don't believe in ghosts or my story," he continued, turning to the bagman, "perhaps you will."

"No, I shan't."

The rattle and crash drew nearer and nearer; but the approaching waggon was still at some distance. Our driver pulled up and drew to one side. The Englishman and Lutterodt again exchanged glances. Then the latter, who was on the

seat behind that on which the bagman sat, suddenly rose and pinned his arms from behind; while the former, who was in front of him, leant back, drew the revolver from his breast-pocket, cocked it, and pointed it at his head.

"Challenge at once, you unbelieving Jew," he cried, "or, by Heaven, I'll blow your brains out."

The bagman turned as white as a sheet. "You daren't do it. It's murder—you'll be hanged. For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, protect me. You won't see me murdered in cold blood. Guard, I appeal to you."

"What's the use?" said the guard. "We shall all be smashed to pieces in a minute, if you don't shout."

"Will you challenge?" demanded the Englishman.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I daren't. Let some one else do it. I'll give anyone five pounds to do it."

"Make it ten," said the guard, "and I'm on. A chap can only die once."

"All right, give it him, give it him. There are notes in my pocket-book."

The Englishman took a pocket-book from the bagman's coat, removed some dirty Standard Bank notes, and handed them to the guard. Then the prisoner was released. By this time the approaching waggon could be dimly discerned through the darkness, some sixty yards off. As it drew near, the guard made his way to the front of the waggon, and, when it was a few yards from us, shouted "Hi."

"Hullo!" came the reply.

"Is that you, Jim?" asked the guard.

"Yes, old pal. How are you getting on?"

"First-rate. Just earned the cheapest tanner I ever got."

The other waggon rolled on, passed us, and was lost in the obscurity behind.

"That was our down waggon," said the guard to the Englishman. "I knew we ought to pass it about here."

THE LUCK OF LADYPRIORS.

A COMPLETE STORY.

LADYPRIORS, as Thames oarsmen may know, is an old Elizabethan house that occupies a pleasant isthmus in one of the quietest and most secluded bends of the river. And at Ladypriors the Lilburns have been settled, if not exactly since the

Conquest, anyhow since the days of Oliver Cromwell. The place, though secluded, is not unfrequented. All through the summer the splash of oars may be heard from the stream; punts are moored here and there in quiet nooks, and fishermen, and fisherwomen, too, ply their patient task from morn to eve. And yet waterfowl haunt the sedgy margins of the river, and in the shallow backwater the heron is sometimes to be seen poised motionless upon his slender limbs.

The neighbouring village, too, is a favourite summer resort, with its noted hostelry, the "Cross Keys," once the homely resort of artists, but now rather famous for its little dinners and the excellent cookery of its proprietor, Mr. Anatole Leroy, and favoured both by the fashionable world and the magnates of the City.

Nor is Ladypriors itself in any way an abode of gloom, although there is a quiet, old-world aspect about it, with its quaint gables, ivy-covered walls, and twisted chimney-shafts—suggestive rather of dignified repose than of active delight. Quiet and dignified people, indeed, had been the Lilburns, with a touch of austerity about the family type; but the late Squire of the Priors had been a brilliant exception. In the early years of the Victorian era he had shone out as a gay young blade, one of the dandies of the period; and in later times he had been one of the pillars of the Turf—an owner and breeder of race-horses.

It is not very far from Ladypriors to the skirts of the Berkshire Downs, and on these downs Mr. Lilburn's horses were trained under the skilful management of the famous Mr. Snaffles. Mares and foals were kept at Ladypriors, in whose rich, grassy paddocks brood mares and foals roamed at will, and the meadows of the home-farm supplied the haystacks for winter provender. In all his plans the Squire was zealously aided by his wife, who was, perhaps, a better judge than her husband in matters equine. Anyhow, during her lifetime the Squire scored many successes. In the prime of life Mrs. Lilburn was thrown from her horse and killed, and from that time the Squire's luck deserted him.

Still Mr. Lilburn clung to his favourite pursuit. He gave up living at Ladypriors, and his widowed sister, Lady Richards, took the place off his hands. One morning, some ten years after his wife's death

and when his son Charles was some four-and-twenty years old, Squire Lilburn was found dead in his own room, having lost heavily the day before at Newmarket.

There was no legal obligation on Charles, his only son and heir, to pay his father's debts of honour; but he did pay them, borrowing from Mr. Paddock, who had been of late years his father's lawyer and chief adviser.

"I don't ask you to follow in my footsteps, Charlie; but if you keep the horses, that colt by Viking out of Valhalla, I have named him 'Wayland Smith,' ought to win everything back again."

Such was the substance of a hasty, unfinished scrawl found by the son among a heap of bills, trainer's accounts, letters pressing for payment of various liabilities—a regular tangle of worry and perplexity. There was nothing here to tempt the young man to follow in his father's footsteps. Where had they led? To ruin; scarcely averted disgrace; and sudden death, perhaps suicide. This last point would never be cleared up. The local doctor was satisfied that his old friend had died of heart disease, and an inquest was avoided. But Charlie had his doubts.

Mr. Paddock, lawyer only in name, and otherwise financier, speculator, money-dealer, and owner of horses, was at hand to advise. He strongly urged young Lilburn to sell the whole estate. He had a friend at hand who would purchase everything—Ladypriors, the outlying farms, stock, furniture, and everything—at a price that would leave a doubtful margin of a few thousands for Charlie's benefit. Mr. Paddock's advice was reiterated by Lady Richards, Charlie's aunt, and the present occupier of Ladypriors. She had always prophesied how her brother's infatuation would end; and she held a high opinion of Mr. Paddock, who, she believed, had done his best to extricate Mr. Lilburn from his difficulties.

But to Charlie the notion of parting with Ladypriors and sinking into the position of a nameless, landless man, was extremely bitter. He loved the old place; he loved the river along whose banks the brightest part of his life had been spent. He loved the horses, too, among which he had been brought up; and his dearest recollections were connected with his mother and her pride in and love for the old place. And he had advisers who gave him more palatable counsel. Chief among these, his

sweetheart, Dell Richards, the sweetest little girl in the world—the stepdaughter of his aunt, Lady Richards.

Now Dell Richards was the heiress of the fine property known as Halsey Combe, which at one point touched on the domains of Ladypriors and stretched away in detached portions, with woods, and corn-fields, and wide pastures, as far as the Berkshire Downs. There was an old saying in those parts often repeated by the gnarled old wearers of smock-frocks in the neighbourhood, although nobody seemed to know its meaning exactly:

Lady Priors and Halsey Combe
Shall never be lost and never be won.
Till Wayland Smith come out of his tomb.

As the doggerel had never been reduced to writing, there was some dispute as to whether "never be won" should not be understood as "never be one." Anyhow although repeated attempts had been made to unite the two properties by matrimonial arrangements, these had always broken down in one way or another.

Why should Lady Richards object to her nephew as a husband for Dell? Well, as she alleged, it was her duty to see that her daughter made a good match, and, owing to her poor brother's miserable infatuation, Charles could no longer be regarded in that light. And Lady Richards held the estate for life, and was her stepdaughter's guardian.

Young Lilburn took the advice that came most gratefully to his own inclinations. As his father had sunk so much in getting together a racing stud—he would do his best to get a return for it. He sold a farm or two and paid off all pressing liabilities. As for the few thousands that Paddock had advanced to save the old Squire's reputation, that excellent fellow begged him not to trouble himself to repay him till he felt his legs again. There were bills to be signed, of course, and interest to be added on, but that was all a matter of form. Charlie travelled about from one race meeting to another, saw that his horses were done justice to, and, on the whole, made both ends meet, although the trainer's bills were a constant source of wonder and dismay. Charlie did not burden himself with the cost of any establishment, bachelor or otherwise, but took up his quarters at the "Cross Keys."

Here one sweet summer's evening he sat by the open window looking out on the green lawn that sloped down to the river—

brink, sipping his after-dinner coffee and smoking a cigarette with a good deal of enjoyment, for he had gone through a long fagging day of heat and dust, and the lovely calm and coolness of the scene were delightful. But he soon shook off his luxurious lethargy, and, strolling down to the river, loosened a skiff from its moorings and paddled slowly up the stream.

Charlie did not paddle very far, for coming to the little creek that led to the boat-house of Ladypriors he dodged under the chain that hung across as a warning to roving oarsmen, and presently shot his skiff into the calm and quiet retreat, where half-a-dozen boats swayed gently to and fro in the ripple caused by the new arrival, while soft lights danced upon the walls and the evening radiance shone through the overhanging foliage.

Soon a light footfall caught Charlie's quick ears. "She is coming, my own, my sweet," he murmured; and he sprang up the steps to meet and clasp in his arms his sweet Cousin Dell.

"Oh, Charlie," she cried, breathless from the hearty salutations of her adorer, "I am so glad to see you again, and victorious too!"

"Yes, I've scored pretty well, Dell: but the best news is this. The weights are out for the Jubilee Stakes, and 'Wayland Smith' is in at six stone six."

"Oh, the dear thing," cried Dell enthusiastically, "I am glad if it is anything good. But why is it good?"

"Why, it's just nothing to him in the way of weight," explained Charlie; "and his own lad George can ride him without wasting; and it will be a fine thing for George if he wins, for it will bring him into notice."

"And for you, what will it do for you Charlie?" asked Dell anxiously. "You are always thinking about other people first, you dear boy."

"Oh, it will do a heap for me," said Charlie. "The stakes are five thousand clear, and I have ventured five hundred on him at ten to one, which is another five thousand."

"You will win ten thousand pounds, Charlie! Oh, I shall pray for 'Wayland Smith.'"

"Don't," said Charlie, nervously; "it might not be lucky." He had a vein of superstition about him, that youth, although not credulous in most things.

"But, Charlie, what a lot it will do for you!" continued Miss Richards.

"A heap," cried Charles. "Why, it will clear off all the old scores, and put things straight. I say, Dell, if I win, I shall give the old lady notice to quit and come back to live at Ladypriors. Not the young one, though, Dell—no, I shall keep her."

"Delicious!" cried Dell, resigning her mouth to be kissed. "But will it ever come to pass?"

"I expect not," said Charlie with a sigh. "I don't think it's lucky to build upon things. To-morrow morning, I shall have a telegram from Snaffles: 'The Smith coughing and had a blister,' or else 'Hit his leg and pulled up lame!' I believe those fellows keep a stock of calamities on hand to keep one's spirits down."

"It is trying," said Dell, sympathetically. "But, Charlie," she continued in a lowered voice, "I have made a discovery. You know that you gave me the key of your mother's room."

This was the late Mrs. Lilburn's own room that her husband could not bear to enter after her death. He had locked it up just as she had left it, and Charlie had found the key among his possessions. The son did not like the notion of leaving the room all ghostly and untenanted, and he had asked Dell to go there and burn any papers that his mother might have left, and have the room dusted and thrown open.

"I found a key in aunt's desk," said Dell, producing a handsome key of antique workmanship. "It had a parchment label attached, 'The Crypt.'"

Charlie looked puzzled, he had never heard of the crypt; the word awoke no associations in his mind. Miss Richards went on to relate how, curiosity naturally excited, she had made an excursion among the cellars of Ladypriors, to see if she could find any place locked up, or generally any mysterious openings. The cellars were famous brick-vaulted apartments; but there was nothing answering to Dell's idea of a crypt. Then she returned to her search in Mrs. Lilburn's room, and among some papers, she found a plan of the old Priory that once stood in the ground. The plan was evidently a tracing from some ancient original, and a more recent hand had added the ground-plan of the house, which had been built near the site. A red cross marked the situation of the Priory church or chapel, and here might be expected to be found the crypt. Dell had puzzled out the matter, till at last she had fixed upon

a likely spot for her researches, and now she was proud to show the result, and led the way towards a door in the old wall of masonry, whose strength and solidity seemed to defy the assaults of time.

Charlie laughed as Dell came to a standstill before the door. "The old tool-house! I know it well; I used to keep rabbits here."

"You did not possess the spirit of research, then," said Dell. "For, look!"

She pushed open a panel at the further end of the tool-house, and there opened out a narrow passage which descended not many feet in depth; at the end of which was a massive oaken door, modelled after an ancient fashion, but still evidently of modern construction.

Charlie looked puzzled. "I don't remember this," he said.

"Here is the door that fits the key," said Dell. "Now, you are the master, open! I feared my fate and refrained."

"This is a business that had better be kept till daylight," said Charles, a slight shudder coming over him. He dreaded he knew not what. Might it be some discovery that would dim the respect and affection with which he cherished his mother's memory? He hated mystery and concealment; and here was a matter in which she could hardly have been thoroughly candid, for he was sure that his father had known nothing of such an opening. Dell also looked pale and nervous, and was glad, in spite of her curiosity, that the opening of the crypt was deferred.

The young people raced up to the house together to get rid of the chill; and Charlie, making his way unceremoniously through a French window into the drawing-room, found himself unexpectedly in the presence of a rather large party of guests. These were mostly people of the neighbourhood—but what was Paddock doing among them? He was not surely the sort of man whose acquaintance Lady Richards, who was severe and even prudish in her social code, would care to cultivate. And yet the pair seemed to be on the very best of terms. Certainly Paddock was a strikingly handsome man; dark and swarthy as a Spaniard, with gleaming eyes that had a strange magnetic effect about them.

Charlie had been accustomed to regard his aunt as one of the veterans. But she was not very old after all, and, in evening dress and with all the advantages of a careful toilette, she was really still a handsome woman. Paddock was certainly very as-

sidious in his attentions to her, and she seemed uncommonly bright and animated in consequence. She had hardly a word for Charlie, who was very indifferent as to her coldness. He did not like the idea of Paddock being admitted on terms of intimacy to the Priors. His mother would never have permitted such a thing, free and gracious as she was to all with whom she came in contact. Well, if he had the luck to win with "Wayland Smith," the Priors should be itself again, with Dell as its presiding genius.

When the party broke up, Paddock volunteered to accompany Charlie to his quarters. He was in high spirits, and rallied his companion upon his gloom. Charlie's gloom soon turned to anger, as Paddock began to expatiate upon his feelings towards Lady Richards. There was a touch of persiflage about his discourse that Charlie resented. Something like a quarrel was imminent; but Paddock kept his temper wonderfully well. Still there was a bitter feeling between the two when they parted.

"I shall have to clip my young bantam's wings," said Paddock to himself, as he mounted his dog-cart and drove away towards town.

Charlie promised himself that he would shake himself free from all association with Paddock, and put an end to his visits at Lady Priors, if only he won the stakes with "the Smith."

Before breakfast next morning young Lilburn went out, hoping to investigate that matter of the crypt. He knew the spot; it was where the old wall of Lady Priors bordered on the village green. There was a good deal of green and common just about the village, with old walls that enclosed nothing in particular; and a massive barn of such dimensions that you might have put a good-sized church inside it, steeple and all. The level of the green rose abruptly towards the wall, forming a smooth, turfy bank, and Charlie, scaling the wall at this point, found that the level of the ground was much higher outside than within the grounds. Thus, while the wall was easily enough scaled from the side of the village, a deep drop was required to reach the surface of the sward within.

Charlie dropped down lightly enough, and, fastening the tool-house door behind him, began his investigations. The lock of the oaken door was rusty, and hard to turn; the massive oaken door clung to the

jamba as if held by something within ; but yielded at last, and swung slowly back, grating on its hinges. Yes, here was the crypt, cool, silent, and solemn. A soft light filtered in through some unseen opening, revealing round massive arches sustained by still more ponderous columns. All was plain and simple, and there was nothing inside but an oaken chair and old carved table ; and in one corner an ancient stone coffin, with a cross elaborately carved upon the lid. Upon the table stood a vase, with the remains of faded flowers, a book (it was old Montaigne), and open at the passage : " Miserable, according to my opinion, is a man "—a feminine hand had annotated in the margin, in pencil, " or a woman, "—" who has not at home a place to himself where he can make much of himself, where he may hide."

Charlie breathed a sigh of relief. There was no mystery here then ; this was his mother's summer-house that she had discovered and kept to herself. It had been a hiding-place, perhaps, in the troubled days of Civil Wars, and before then the last resting-place of the fathers of the Priory. He looked about for other relics of his mother's former presence, and found in one corner a little ivory tatting-shuttle, with thread still attached to it. He let it lie there, and then he picked up a little diary, evidently the repository of his mother's secret confidences. Looking over the pages hastily, he caught sight of his own name repeated here and there with some little incident recorded of his childish development. One passage, to which his attention was attracted, ran thus :

" I am unhappy at winning all this money, and yet I can't help going on. What shall I do with it ? If I give it to George, he will spend it. I should like to build a church with it, or perhaps a hospital, and yet, after all, I should like to keep it for Charlie ; to say to him some day when he is overwhelmed with youthful troubles : ' Here, Charlie, here is plenty of money, dip your hands into it ; go, spend it and be happy.' For it is so easy to be happy when we are young, alas ! "

" The poor mother ! " said Charlie, softened, and then, after a pause. " Well, I suppose the dad spent the money. Never mind, I've got youth, and health, and the best sweetheart in the world, and ' Wayland Smith ' to make the running for me."

Charlie locked up the place, leaving everything as he had found it. But all he had seen strengthened his resolution of

keeping the Priors, if by any means he could, clear of its incumbrances. To have a stranger groping about the place and transforming it, would be desecration. Then he went to look for Dell, and happily found her coming across the rose garden that was now in its full beauty. Dell was looking for him, in fact, having a budget of news to impart.

The stepmother had just confided to her that she was going to marry again—to marry Mr. Paddock, who had made her a most eligible offer. Mr. Paddock might be a self-made man, but he was of the most distinguished presence, with the entrée to the very best society, and of great wealth. Issuing from her present retirement, Lady Richards intended to take her place in the fashionable world, and, under such auspices, Dell might expect to be settled advantageously before long. Lady Richards had not failed to remind her stepdaughter that she was entirely dependent upon her, and that upon her dutiful conduct and obedience depended all her future prospects.

Charlie was highly indignant at the news. He went at once to his aunt and remonstrated with her on what he called her infatuation. The man was well enough, he said, as a chance acquaintance ; but neither his character nor his breeding was of a kind to warrant him in seeking to enter his (Charlie's) family. And his object was evidently merely to get hold of the revenues of the Combe property, and apply them to his own uses. Lady Richards was, of course, indignant at Charlie's interference ; and the climax was reached when he asserted that he would not allow Dell to remain under her stepmother's roof for a single hour after Lady Richards's marriage to that man. Nor would he have the wedding celebrated at the Priors. Lady Richards must leave before that event took place. He would send her a formal notice unless she would promise him as much as that.

In all this Charlie was very high-handed and perhaps unjust, and his threats clearly went beyond his powers. For what voice had he in the disposition of Miss Richards's future ? And as for Ladypriors, it was doubtful whether he could call it really his own.

" I don't intend to leave the Priors," cried Lady Richards indignantly. " It is you who will have to leave, not I. I have some one to protect me now, sir, and he will see that you are put in your proper position."

"And what is that, pray?" asked Charlie, with forced calmness.

"The gutter, sir," cried Lady Richards. "Son of a disgraced gambler, what better fate do you deserve?"

After this declaration of war, there was nothing more to be said. "We shall have to run away, Dell," said Charlie, as he took his leave of his sweetheart, "for you shall not live under the same roof as Paddock for an hour."

There was no time to be lost in making arrangements to face the storm that was impending. Lady Richards held a mortgage upon the Priors, and it would be hardly possible for Charlie to regain possession till he paid her off. He must get somebody to stand in her shoes, but that was difficult under the circumstances. However, if he won the Jubilee Stakes, hope whispered in his ear, he could manage the business himself, if not, he would have to go a-borrowing.

The days flew past for Charlie in a whirl of business and pleasure. The reports as to "Wayland Smith" were all "couleur de rose"—and yet Lilburn noticed with some uneasiness that the horse was more freely laid against than backed by the knowing ones.

Another disquieting symptom was the sudden favour into which Mr. Crowfoot's "Fulham" had been taken, a horse in which, as everybody knew, Mr. Paddock had a strong interest. Now this looked as if his owners expected to win with him; and yet, as Charlie and Mr. Paddock both knew, he could not give the "Smith" ten pounds in weight, which he was asked to do.

Just about this time, that is on the afternoon before the race, Miss Richards was standing on the terrace in front of the Priors, wondering if she should see anything of Charlie before he started for the race meeting, when she heard the sound of a horse's hoofs upon the gravel drive approaching the house. Looking in the direction of the sound she saw—and her eyes opened wide with astonishment at the sight—a fine racehorse walking up the drive with a somewhat diminutive rider upon his back. He was a beautiful creature, the horse, that is; as for the rider, he was so wrapped up in a long coat that only his boots could be seen, and they were certainly beautifully polished; but the polish of the boots was put to shame by the satin coat of the horse, who advanced with wiry, springy tread. Dell ran across the lawn to meet the animal, exclaiming, "Why, surely this is, can only be, Wayland Smith."

"Hush, Miss," said the boy who rode him, raising his whip-hand to his lips. "Oh, Miss," he cried, in a voice trembling with excitement, "is the young Squire about? I must see him instantly."

"Take the horse round to the stables," cried Dell. "There are plenty of empty boxes there. Stay, the gate is locked. I have a key, and will show you the way. Oh, you beauty," she cried, addressing the horse, who permitted her to pat his polished shoulder with every sign of satisfaction. "There is nothing wrong with him, is there, George—for you are George, I suppose?"

"Yes, Miss, I'm George. No, Miss, there's nothing wrong with 'the Smith.' But there's something awfully wrong at Snaffles's, Miss. I must see the master."

"You look after your horse, George, and I'll find the master," said Dell; and, just as she was, she hurried into the village and arrived breathless, with her hair blown all over her face at the door of the "Cross Keys." A knot of young men were standing at the door, who stared their hardest, but made way for her to enter.

"What, Mademoiselle!" exclaimed Anatole in delight and astonishment. "Ma femme she descend instantly to receive Mademoiselle."

"Oh, don't make a fuss, Anatole, but call Mr. Lilburn at once. Make haste, instantly," cried Dell, stamping her feet with impatience at Anatole's beaming face.

"Ah, but I believe, yes, truly I fear that Monsieur has already set forth to the course."

"Stop him, then," cried Dell. "Send after him, do you hear?"

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Charlie's voice from the door; for one of the young men, who had listened of course to what was going on, had condoned their offence by calling back Charlie, who had just started from the inn stables. "What has happened? Is anything wrong with my aunt?"

"Yes; she has desperate influenza," said Dell, "and wants to see you. And now row me back to the Priors as quickly as you can, and I will tell you her message." This was said for the benefit of all the wide-open ears that were listening, and then, as Charlie followed her amazed and mystified, she whispered: "'The Smith' is here."

"Here!" cried Charlie, as he handed Dell into the boat. "Why, he is half-way to London by this time."

"He is here," panted Dell. "George

has ridden him over, and he must see you at once; and there's something wrong."

Charlie said no more, but sculled on desperately. The nearest landing-place for the stables was only a couple of hundred yards distant from the inn lawn; and, in a few minutes, Charlie was dashing up the path to the stables with Dell close upon his heels.

George was only too eager to tell his story. "But it's nothing wrong with 'the Smith'; just cast your eyes over him, sir," cried the lad, leading the way to the box, where the horse was standing, now closely sheeted and hooded; and dexterously sweeping off the horse's clothing, George stood by, modestly awaiting the meed of approval.

"Yes, he looks fit enough," said Charlie after a critical examination. "Well, speak up, George."

"Sir, it was this very morning," began George; "the boys was preparing 'the Smith' for his gallop, and me sitting in a corner reading the 'Sporting Life,' and wondering how they could dare to lay such odds against him, when, lo and behold, I hear the gate swing, and see two gents walking up towards the house. Mr. Snaffles was there in a minute, just as if he had been looking out for them. 'Servant, gentlemen,' says he, 'what may be your business?' And then one of the gents pull something out of his pocket. 'Suit of Paddock,' he says. 'We seize Mr. Lilburn's horses.' 'You're aware, gentlemen,' says Mr. Snaffles very polite, 'as I've got a lion upon them horses.' Now what could he mean by that, sir?" pausing and addressing Mr. Lilburn respectfully.

"I understand George. He has a lien of course, for his bill; go on."

"Quite right," says the other gent, "we shan't interfere with you, Mr. Snaffles." And then the governor smiles quite pleasant. "Can't go against the law, gentlemen," he says, "of course; but step into my little place and take a glass of Madeira before you begin." And so they did. And I take a look round and see the boy had just got the saddle on 'the Smith' and I take the bridle under my arm and walk him quietly out at the gate, and the minute I get on the turf I'm on to his back and off over the downs. And I bring him along, sir, by the bridle-paths; he hasn't had two hundred yards of hard road, sir; and I bring him straight to you, sir, thinking as how you'd best know what to do, so as he may run to-morrow and win the Jubilee Stakes."

"You've done well, George," cried his master, patting him kindly on the shoulder. "I shan't forget this, however things turn out. You see, Dell," he went on, turning to Miss Richards, "here is the demon Paddock at work. They say he ruined my poor father, and I quite believe it now; for see how he is going for me!"

The question was whether the horse was safe for the night in his present quarters. Charlie thought not, for the Sheriff's men having taken possession at the trainer's, would probably continue their work at the Priors. But Dell argued that Mr. Paddock would have too much consideration for Lady Richards to put the bailiffs in at the Priors, and that no one would think of looking for "the Smith" in such an obvious place of concealment. And then there was a van on the premises, which had been sometimes used for taking horses to racecourses in the neighbouring districts, and when darkness came on "the Smith" could take his place in this and be drawn to some stables near the park, where he could rest "perdu" till the time came for appearing at the starting post.

And then the hopes of such a happy dénouement were shattered by George, who had been keeping a look-out by the gate. "Here's one of them, sir," he cried with suppressed excitement, "one of the gents I mentioned coming across the lawn."

The sheriffs' officer, however, fortunately took his way towards the house. Scouts were despatched in the shape of willing stable-helpers to see if the coast were clear, as evidently the only remaining chance was to get the horse off the premises; but the scouts returned with the disheartening intelligence that all the gates were padlocked, and guarded each by two seedy-looking myrmidons of the law. Evidently the seizure was complete, and every pains had been taken to make it effectual. "The Smith" was fairly trapped.

"Swim him through the river," suggested Dell.

Charlie shook his head. "The river is deep, and swift, and strong. We won't risk the life of a noble brute for the sake of money."

Dell plucked Charlie by the sleeve and whispered "the Crypt."

"Ah, the Crypt," murmured Charlie, his face lighting up, "what a splendid notion!"

There was no time to be lost—at any moment the officers might make their appearance. A few words apprised George

of the situation. "The Smith" followed George as quietly as possible. Charlie seized a bag of oats and threw it over his shoulder, and Dell followed with a pail of water. Where a man can go upright a horse can go in a general way. Still George looked doubtfully at the narrow entrance to the tool-shed. "The Smith" shared the misgiving, snorted, and drew back a little. Footsteps were approaching, voices, strange voices, were heard from the stable-yard. Still "the Smith" stood shivering nervously and hanging back from the dark and narrow passage.

George spoke kindly to the horse, patted him, fondled him, called him by name; finally letting go his bridle he ran down the dark passage and disappeared. The horse whinnied, snorted, and plunged in after the lad, his early and faithful companion.

Yes, the poor beast on whom so much depended was safely deposited in his hiding-place. The burning question now was, how to get him out again.

It was something of an ordeal for poor George to find himself in this underground vault as the light gradually declined and premature darkness came over the scene. But Mr. Lilburn then appeared with candles, matches, and a basket of provisions. All was quiet, and the men in possession had no suspicion that the greatest prize of all was within their clutches. Indeed, the men of the law had not yet discovered that he had been snatched away from them. The stable-boys had moved an old respectable coach-horse into "the Smith's" box, and the officers, not being deeply skilled in horsemanship, had put him down as "Wayland Smith." And the news had been wired up and down and all over the country that "the Smith" had been seized by the sheriff and could not possibly run for the Jubilee Stakes.

George chuckled mightily over this last piece of news, and its inspiring nature kept up his spirits into the still hours of the night. His master, on leaving, had bade him look out and listen for any communication from outside; but midnight was chimed forth from the old church tower before he heard a sound. Then there was a dull thud and shaking at the further end of the crypt. Soon a hole appeared, and the light of a lantern shone through it.

"All right, George," said the master's voice; "we'll dig you out in no time."

Half-a-dozen spades were at work, and

the soil was a light sand, so that in less than half-an-hour there was an opening through which George and his horse could march through.

"Bless me," said the voice of a veteran digger, "if this baint Wayland Smith a coming out of his tomb!"

Very pleasant indeed was the scene as the hour approached for the decision of the great race. Here was no dust, no crowding, no hurlyburly, although all the stands and enclosures were well filled and the course was thronged with an eager crowd of well-dressed spectators. Among these last, every now and then, a ring would be formed, not for pugilistic purposes, but around some vociferating tipster, who, hoarse with the continued practice of his oratory, bleated out boasts of previous successes, and promises of still greater results on the present occasion. On similar pretences impromptu lotteries were formed here and there, flourishing for a time, and then shouldered out of existence by burly policemen. Wherever a little knot of people were gathered the purse-trick men were at work, and stealthy pickpockets wormed their way here and there—the pariah dogs of civilisation, to whom no man accords willingly anything better than a kick or a curse.

Meantime, well-appointed drags rattled softly over the turf, and were drawn up in long lines in front of the stands; while gay costumes and killing combinations of colours fluttered down from the roofs, and with their wearers glided away to form fresh groups on the lawns or about the balconies of the Club enclosure. A military band struck up, and by its music added to the suggestion of gaiety and light-hearted enjoyment; but at a little distance its music was drowned in the clamour of the betting-enclosure, where the hundreds congregated meant business and nothing else.

A bell rings, the police are clearing the course, and an elderly gentleman on a ladder is arranging the numbers of the horses about to start, as they stand upon the "correct card." First the number, then the jockey's name. Number five on the card is "Wayland Smith," and having stuck up number four, the elderly gentleman pauses and looks down. There is a general craning of heads and levelling of glasses, for rumour had it that number five was, in sporting language, "a dead un." Number five, George White, now appeared in as glaring white and black as paint

pots could manage; and a cheer rang out from the spectators, for "the Smith" had been a popular favourite. The roar in the betting-ring gathered force and volume, Paddock pushed his way here and there, burly and confident, backing his own horse freely on every side. Charlie stood by the rails, trying to look cheerful and unconcerned; he had no more money to lose on his horse, and the mingled voices of the crowd sounded in his ears as if afar off, while the whole scene had no more reality to him than a gaily painted picture.

Lady Richards was on the course in an elaborate and youthful costume, and Dell was by her side, and unable to exchange a word with her lover; but she looked continually his way, and once their eyes met, and they did their best to express all they felt in that one glance.

All the rest was like a dream—the terrible suspense of the protracted start; the approaching thunder of hoofs; the vivid dash of colour; the tension of wild suspense. Charlie did not even see the race, he shut up his glass, bent his eyes on the green turf and felt as if his heart-strings were cracking. The first thing he was conscious of was seeing Mr. Snaffles cheerfully jump over the rails into the course, and then Charlie followed him.

"Thank you, Snaffles," he said, "I'll lead the horse in myself."

Yes, it was true; "Wayland Smith" had won by a head. And now there was nothing but triumph as Charlie led his horse into the paddock. George was as red as fire with pride and excitement. The scales were passed, the signal hoisted "all right," and a crowd thronged about the horse, chiefly ladies, who patted and admired him, while "the Smith" received their attentions with the utmost calmness and nonchalance.

"What's the matter, Charlie?" whispered Dell, who had contrived to lose her stepmother, and had managed to squeeze into the paddock with the rest. "You don't look pleased."

"You know how I feel, Dell," said Charlie, looking down upon her with kind, humid eyes. "I feel as if this were a legacy from the dear old governor."

Next morning, the news was about everywhere that Mr. Paddock had shot himself in his own bed-room the night before; and that he had left a hundred thousand pounds' worth of debts behind him—his losses on the Jubilee Stakes having

only been the proverbial last straw. Lady Richards went abroad next day, taking her stepdaughter with her.

The old wiseacres about Ladypriors were quite convinced that the old saying had been completely fulfilled. Mr. Paddock would have had the Priors had it not been for Wayland Smith coming out of his tomb. Hence, they had been lost by that event, and, as young Mr. Charles had got them back, there was the winning of them; while, as he was going to marry the heiress of Halsey Combe, the justification of ancient prophecy was complete.

Charlie himself was not so sure about this last part of the business. He could now pay out the men in possession and satisfy all Mr. Snaffles's claims. Then he was saddled with a nasty lawsuit or two about Mr. Paddock's affairs, and it seemed very doubtful whether he would be ever able to marry and live at the Priors. But visiting the old crypt one day, meaning to have it thoroughly cleansed and repaired, he saw that in removing his mother's belongings from the place, he had left behind the little ivory tatting-shuttle. He picked it up, but the thread attached to it was fast at the other end, and, following the trail, he found that it led to a little niche in the wall, where there was an opening just large enough to admit a hand. Still guiding his fingers by the thread, they touched a little parchment-bound volume, which he drew forth. Between the leaves was the morsel of tatting that had no doubt been the last thing his mother had been at work upon. At the head of the page was written, in his mother's hand, "Investments I have made for —," the blank filled up at a later date with "Charlie." Then followed a very satisfactory list of investments in the Three per Cents. Had there ever been such investments, or had they been a mere effort of imagination? Charlie took the pains to enquire at the Bank of England, and found to his joy, that not only had the investments existed, but that they still were in existence, and the dividends paid towards the reduction of the National Debt, although they had not effected much in that way as yet. But now that a rightful claimant had appeared, there would be no difficulty in transferring the stock to his name.

There are no rocks ahead now. Lady Richards has signified her approval of Charlie as a husband for her stepdaughter, and that secures the reversion to Halsey

Combe, and the young people have all the good wishes of the neighbourhood for a long lease of luck at Ladypriors.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcoates," etc.

CHAPTER XXII.

AT Christmas-time, almost all the boarders—the permanencies as well as the casuals—went away on visits to friends at distances more or less remote. It was held to be a sort of disgrace, a mark of social insignificance, to have no invitation either to accept or to refuse, and in any case to discuss in all its bearings for weeks before. The Drews, perhaps, had the greatest luxury of choice; but the Sherringtons had also packed the precious manuscripts, and were going to share the hospitality of a cousin who made an extremely presentable show in conversation.

"My husband is going to take a complete rest," Mrs. Sherrington announced. "The Kensingtons have a large house, and one can do as one chooses. Alf will be able to have breakfast in his own room, and won't be bored with seeing more of the house party than he likes."

There were those who held that Mr. Sherrington's life was one long afternoon of repose; but these, of course, were the unlearned and ignorant, who knew nothing of the stress of brain-work. Little Miss Dicey could have set them right; she, too, was going off with a large quantity of ruled paper in her trunk on the double duty of making holiday and studying "backgrounds;" even Honoria Walton felt compelled to yield to the tradition that enjoins family reunion at the close of the year, and had already set out for Yorkshire.

Best of all, in Tilly's estimation, was the delightful assurance of Mr. Behrens's intended departure. Business; family duty; pleasure; the desire to make his presence missed and consequently more valued; who shall say what motive impelled him? Tilly, woman-like, troubled herself not at all to calculate reasons, and only rejoiced in the fact. The cup of her satisfaction was quite full, when Madame Drave, with over-abundant apology, came to entreat a brief leave of absence.

Not for worlds would she inconvenience her kindest patrons; if Miss Burton had the smallest hesitation, the least doubt as

to the housekeeper's ability to act in her absence, Madame would with cheerfulness abandon her friends.

Miss Burton assured her a little too precipitately that she could be excellently spared, and that Mr. Burton's appetite might be safely entrusted to the housekeeper's care.

"And now," she flew up to her uncle and seized him in a rapturous embrace, "now I shall have you all to myself!"

They had, by her decree, resisted Mrs. Popham's urgency, and even declined Lady Craven's invitation to contribute to her amusement, and were to spend their first English Christmas in the boarding-house. Christmas had for neither of them the binding associations it had for their neighbours; they were more familiar with the revels of Hogmanay, and Uncle Bob, at least, with the mysteries of "first-footing;" but their new aspirations and social impulses made the recognition of the day imperative.

"We'll give a party," said Uncle Bob (he pronounced it "pairty") "but I'm blessed if I know who there's left to come. There's Behrens gone off, nobody knows where."

"Oh, we'll manage without him," said Tilly, with cheerful conviction. "And I have thought of some people."

"There's young Temple——"

"There are two young Temples—three, indeed; we must ask Jessie."

"I won't have that—that——" his limited vocabulary refused him a dark enough term.

"Never mind characterising her," said Tilly with a smile; "we know what she is."

"She won't darken my door."

"Well, it isn't your door," she said coaxingly. "You can get out of it that way. It's Madame Drave's door, and the boarding-house will survive Jessie's presence. She must be asked."

She said it with so unsmiling an earnestness that he had to give in. He yielded with a much better grace when she suggested the two young people who dwelt at the top of the house: the girl-teacher, who could not rejoice in the enforced leisure which curtailed her slender income; and the pale, prematurely grey boy-clerk, whom the Bank released for but a poor two days, and left without energy to make them merry.

Something of Uncle Bob's old sense of importance was stirred by the prospect of this dinner: he busied himself the whole

morning in extracting from the house-keeper's memory all the rarest, costliest, and least seasonable dishes that could be procured; and he felt resigned to endure Jessie Temple's presence when he found that he could easily spend a great deal of money. He himself added to the number of the guests by extending an invitation to the City man whom he met accidentally upon the stairs, and who announced himself free for the next two days from the necessity of railway travel.

Young Runciman had reluctantly gone on a round of visits; but there were reasons which would have pointed to his exclusion, even if he had been at home. Upon serious consideration there was no one else to ask, and the dinner had, perforce, to take the character of a feast bestowed on the poor, who could not hope to repay the debt. The host liked it none the less well for this: he could wrap himself once more in the comfort of his riches; and the soreness that had grown with his social distrust of himself, was soothed by the feeling that nobody present was worth sixpence, or could claim to look down on him from any higher point of vantage.

He was even very angry when a refusal came from Jessie. The temperature of the note never rose above zero; but it was so extremely polite in its curt phrasing, that he was puzzled and put out.

"There, read it out, my lass"—he tossed it over to Tilly—"the writing wriggles about so, you can't make head or tail of the sense."

Tilly, for whom it presented no difficulties, skimmed it rapidly.

"She is quite sure John will come."

She deftly extracted this particular.

"Oh, he'll come," said Uncle Bob with a hint of disdain. "What's she going to do?"

"She says her health doesn't allow her to go anywhere," said Tilly, softening the refusal as much as she could; "and it is quite true. I don't think she ever leaves the house."

"Well, she won't get the chance of coming here again, that's all," he said doggedly. He was certainly rather difficult that morning. He had rebelled because he had to ask her, and now, with the inconsistency of man, he was again in arms because she refused to come and be overwhelmed by the spectacle of his hospitality, and he hunted vainly in his memory for some one to supply the vacant place.

"There's that chap that came here one

day when you were out—a friend of Lady Craven's. You find out where he lives and we'll drop him a line."

But she said this was utterly impossible, and she opposed it with a resolution that at last aroused his suspicions.

"You'll be telling me next that he's in love with you like that lad Runciman," he chuckled.

"Indeed I shall tell you nothing of the kind!" she protested, though she blushed.

He was not ill-pleased for his part, and the unexpected discovery of his own sagacity tickled his lightly-stirred vanity and restored him to good-humour. That Tilly should have lovers was only a fair tribute to her charms and his importance; he cared not how many she had so long as she favoured but one. He would have liked, indeed, to see lords and noble gentlemen at her feet, that he might have had the rare joy of scorning them.

His sense of inferiority, of a something lacking that he could not buy, burned in him, and seemed to acquire a fresh vitality to sting as he dumbly brooded over it, and it helped the growth of a resolution to which he abandoned himself more and more. Tilly should owe nothing to any of these fine people; should no longer be beholden to them for invitations. She should show them that it was in her power to create a rank and place for herself. There was money enough; and if there was not, there was more to be made. He laughed aloud as he recalled his reserve of power, and thought of the wealth that might so easily be doubled; her husband should owe everything to him, and the pride he felt in his own deeds would henceforward be illustrated by the pair who would spend his wealth with distinction and force the world to respect it.

These were the hopes and ambitions, quite natural in a man who had had his own making to do, with which he fed himself. Perhaps if Behrens had been coming out and in as usual, he would have felt compelled to submit this idea to his criticism, as he had already felt compelled to extract his opinion of Fred; but Behrens had taken himself off for the time, and in his absence it became too firmly rooted to be easily shaken. He had, too, like all men of limited nature, a native obstinacy that saved him from the risk of conversion by argument, and the project grew so dear that in the end he jealously concealed it in his own bosom, lest its premature publication should somehow work it ill.

This plan, and one other more or less nearly connected with it, which he developed later, were his two solitary reticences where Behrens was concerned. Sometimes they wore to him an air of infidelity, and his conscience stung him; then again a reaction would come, and with the dread of opposition he would seal his lips more firmly than ever. They both remained finally untold.

The fact of having conceived and ripened unaided a course of behaviour sweetened his good-nature, even so far as to make him forget Jessie's offence; and Tilly found that the dawning of Christmas Day brought with it the realisation of almost all her old dreams and desires. She had Uncle Bob once more to herself, and could do with him as she would.

Two or three things went to make it a very memorable Christmas Day. The young-old clerk of the upper regions was employed in the same Bank as John Temple—a fact John had early discovered and adroitly put to use. The younger man held an inferior position; but the two were set free at the same hour and often walked home together. Two or three days before the dinner to which they were both bidden, a remarkable and most astounding thing happened to the Burtons' fellow-boarder, whose name was Austin. This was nothing less than the offer of an excellent berth in a City house, at a salary that seemed fabulous wealth compared with the generosity of the Bank. The young fellow was so bewildered and dazzled with this strange piece of good fortune that he was still grappling with his astonishment when the hour of release arrived, and it hardly seemed more credible when he clothed it in words for his friend's ear.

"Do you think the old gentleman—your uncle—had anything to do with it?" he asked.

"I think the young lady, my cousin, had something to do with it," said John, with a laugh.

"Heaven bless her for a kind heart!" he said to himself, accepting this good for another without a reluctance. Perhaps he would not have been so well pleased with this new proof of Tilly's generosity had he not known of the dreams which filled his companion's breast.

"Don't you go, young 'un, and suppose that it's your astounding merit that has brought you this bit of luck," he said good-humouredly. "Our chief would never have picked you out of the depths of your obscurity."

"Oh, I know, I know," said the other humbly, "it wasn't done for my sake at all. You think I—we—ought to thank her?"

"I think 'we' ought to get married and ask her to be bridesmaid, and you can book me for best man, Austin," John answered with unusual gaiety. He was as pleased as if he had got promotion for himself, and that is a pinnacle of virtuous feeling to which few of us reach.

Perhaps the young-old clerk with the grey head and the face that was more than ever innocently boyish, held the advice to be worth something; it was apparent to everybody, at any rate, that he had taken the preliminary step towards matrimony when he appeared in Tilly's private sitting-room on the day of the dinner.

Never was a lover who betrayed himself so helplessly; never a pair of lovers, one might say, for when the girl came in there was the strange light, too, in her dreamy eyes that is lit by but one sentiment. It was there for everybody to read, even the commercial traveller—who was the soul of good-nature, but who was not disposed to take life imaginatively except where the spirits were concerned—saw it writ there large, and it evoked in him many curious wonderings.

"What does the young fool want to get married for? Doesn't know when he's well off. Like enough she's stupid, or she may nag: looks as if he would be a good subject for nagging."

Nobody else took so disagreeable and despondent a view, however, and this most adventurous and foolish young pair gave a special distinction to the gathering. To young people a love affair has a perennial interest, since it is an experience that may arrive to one's self at any moment; and everybody, except Uncle Bob, was young. Even the City man—though he had turned forty, and had no hair on the crown of his head, was not yet safe from attack, in spite of his cynicism; and of the remaining guests, one was Tilly's secret, and one her avowed, lover.

Fred, who felt that success was possible, even perhaps attainable in the near distance, looked on with a curious interest and even with some critical and discriminating admiration, as the girl governess came in.

She wore a grey gown, very plainly and sparsely made, and a broad white collar; it had a puritan rather than an artistic effect, and this was not lessened by the dreamy calm of her large, clear eyes. The vague

look left them, however, as they rested on Tilly, and they became charged with a sudden consciousness; with an awakening in them of boundless gratitude and a flush that faintly overspread her paleness, she stooped and kissed Tilly's hand.

It was a spontaneous movement of gratitude that was very pretty to see, but Tilly, half ashamedly, shrank from it; then she leaned forward and kissed the girl on the lips.

"A happy Christmas," she said, "and many more of them for you—and another—in the days to come."

When she turned back to the other guests, it was John's glance she chanced to meet; it was full of sympathy and instinctive understanding, as if he knew everything she felt and wished to express without being told. Fred was looking at her too, but it was the æsthetic point of view he happened to take—it all depends on the mixture a man is made of, what he sees first. It came into Fred's head that he ought to have been an artist, rather than the slave of Perpetual Motion, and in that case he would have painted a picture of two girls embracing, and would have called it—

He had not quite fixed on a name when dinner was announced by the waiter hired for the occasion, and as this was a summons Uncle Bob was always eager to obey, everyone was promptly on his feet. Uncle Bob had been made to understand that etiquette demanded the offer of his arm to the only lady guest, and he submitted to the ceremony with subdued impatience; as for Tilly, she had four swains to choose from, and she disappointed three of them by accepting the escort of the City man, whose bald head won him this distinction.

The vacant place at her side, Fred managed without apparent diplomacy to secure. Uncle Bob's brow cleared when he glanced up and saw him there; if he had had his way, Fred should have taken her down, but Tilly having subtly proved the impossibility of this, and strengthened her argument by quotation from the highest authorities, he was fain to be appeased by this concession. The City man might be counted on to appreciate the good things, of which there were already savoury suggestions in the air, and if Temple could not make use of his chances when he got them, he was a greater fool than he looked.

Fred was by no means a fool, and though he liked a good dinner, he liked Tilly Burton even better. The white heather

was going to bring him luck at last. As he looked at her, he felt half-intoxicated by the brilliance of his prospects. It had not taken him very long to discover that he was acceptable to the uncle; it took him a still shorter time to convince himself that he owed this to his own merits. He was probably quite the most brilliant young fellow the old boy had ever met; and he was quite willing to go on being brilliant, and to fall in with any plans for display his future uncle-in-law might develope—with one proviso: the benefactor must be a mere spectator, and that from a distance; his nearness would spoil everything. He put it all shrewdly enough to himself. Here was money, heaps of it, which Mr. Burton could not use effectively himself, but which he might enjoy vicariously, as it were, in the persons of a nephew and niece. It was the accepted rôle of the stage uncle; and there was no reason why, for once, it should not be played in real life. Fred was well aware that he was not likely to make any handsome provision for himself out of the investigation of patents, and here was a chance that was like to lift him above the necessity of work for evermore. He considered it a great thing that he was able to be genuinely in love with Tilly, as well as with her fortune. No doubt he would have felt the impulse to marry her even if she had been ugly and stupid; but she was beautiful, gracious, and charming, and might even reward a man's choice if she had not a penny.

Fred, it will be seen, took sensible nineteenth-century views of matrimony. It is only Quixotes like John Temple who are born too late, or too early, to accept the comfortable doctrine that money doubles the delights of love.

He had still, of course, to win Tilly's assent to her uncle's scheme; but his hesitations on this point were always speedily enough combated. He had already established a confidential intimacy that easily enough glides into something warmer. They had danced for weeks together, and, considering how many couples waltz into matrimony with far slenderer opportunities every season, this was a great matter. Then he had made himself useful, almost indispensable, in a hundred ways, and might reasonably hope that Tilly would find it difficult to give up his society.

John Temple was left to discover with a pang how far his cousin had outstripped him in intimacy, as they sat together at the Christmas dinner. The City man fulfilled

all that was required of him in attending strictly to his meal, and the talk was thus left to Fred, who was too excited to have much appetite. He managed to give it even a greater air of confidence than it warranted. It bristled with allusions; it had a "little language" all its own; and John, who had no such fund of association with which to strengthen his phrases, felt raging jealousy in his heart. In Fred's ways, his tones, his looks, there was nothing to seize conspicuously, and yet there was everything.

"I've hit on a perfect little mare at last," he said; "she's quite a beauty. I think she is almost worthy of you."

"Am I worthy of her? I haven't ridden anything more ambitious than Cousin Spencer's 'Sheltie,' and it managed to unseat me more than once."

"I'll take too good care of you to let that happen," he said with a needless lowering of his voice, "if you will trust yourself to me."

"Oh, I don't suppose you want to see me killed exactly," she said with perhaps too conscious a carelessness.

"Why shouldn't we have our first ride to-morrow?" he urged; "there is no frost, and it is as mild as spring. I will come at any hour you like to name."

"How can you get away? I thought business came before everything."

"My business is to please you. If you wish it, nothing shall hinder me," he assured her.

This was the sort of entertainment to which John found himself bidden. His uncle and the City man gave themselves up solidly to the business of dining, and found little leisure for talk; the lovers, who had been made happy that day, were wholly engrossed with each other, and there was nothing left for him to do but to eat and listen.

When the toasts went round, the talk became more general.

"We must drink to the absent boarders," said Tilly, allowing Fred to put a little champagne in her glass. "How strange it is to be here without them! John, don't you feel inspired? You are sitting in the seat of the lady novelist."

"Who is certainly not missed," murmured Fred.

"Well," said Uncle Bob, lukewarmly, "I find I can get along without them, but I don't wish them any ill. Fill up your

glasses, lads, and we'll drink to them. And I wish they may all have had as good a dinner as I've had this day."

They duly responded to this sentiment in spite of its offensive pointedness. It was a good dinner, but it was salt and ashes to the taste of one guest.

When the ladies had gone upstairs, Fred took his glass, and, walking round the table, sat down by Mr. Burton.

"I saw a mare to-day that will carry Miss Burton capitally, I believe," he said, "been ridden by a lady, and is as quiet as a lamb. A pretty creature."

"Well, did you buy it?" Uncle Bob asked, waiting for a pause.

"Well, no. I thought you'd like to see her before concluding the bargain. They're asking a longish figure."

"I don't suppose it's too long for me," he said roughly, with a frown and protrusion of his lips.

"I could have her sent round to-morrow," said Fred, shifting the topic on to a less dangerous ledge, "and Miss Burton might try her paces, and see how she likes her. I could come at any time—if you would trust Miss Burton to me. I would make it my first care that she came to no harm."

He spoke less fluently than usual, but he was very much in earnest, and possibly his words had a deeper meaning than met the ear.

Mr. Burton swallowed a glass of wine before he answered, and then he said slowly, without looking up: "Yes, I can trust her to you—if she will go—well, you can take her. But it's all as she wishes," he added, as if by an after-thought.

"Her wishes will rule in this as in everything," said Fred gravely, not letting his exultation peep out in his tones.

John—who was miserably watching this interview from the other end of the table, where the City man, his tongue loosened by the generous vintage, was dwelling mysteriously on spiritualistic experiences, content to secure his neighbour's silence—did not hear the low-spoken words; but he caught Fred's glance as he lifted his head.

It was gay, smiling, assured; the glance of a conqueror, and it changed subtly to something of good-natured pity, and contempt, and laughing superiority as it rested on his cousin.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER VI.

"I HAVE GIVEN MY PROMISE."

WHEN his servant came to his room next morning, Neale Kenyon was in a burning fever. As the day wore on, he became so much worse that the doctor telegraphed to London for another medical man.

Alexis had resolved to leave the Abbey that day, but under the circumstances she felt she ought to remain at least until the fever had reached its turning-point. But she was intensely miserable and ill at ease.

A strange and unconquerable resolve had rooted itself in her mind, and she had determined on its accomplishment from the moment that Neale Kenyon's mad words had stung her to the quick on the previous night.

"He could not have meant them," she told herself, as she heard the wild ravings and mutterings proceeding from the sick-room. "The fever must have been coming on even then. When it leaves him he will have forgotten all about that Quixotic idea of restitution. It can do no harm if I pave the way."

So a telegram was despatched to Scotland Yard, and the next morning a quiet, grave-looking personage was closeted with Miss Kenyon for a long time, and received certain instructions from her which he promised to carry out.

The grave personage did not come again, but at the end of the week Miss Kenyon announced that she was going

away on business, and she left Lady Breresford in charge at the Abbey, and taking her French maid with her, went up to London, and drove straight to Claridge's, where rooms were ready for her.

In the evening the grave personage called to see her, and was with her for a very brief time. He left, however, with an extremely satisfied face and a cheque for three figures in his pocket-book.

At eight o'clock next morning, Alexis Kenyon left the hotel, unaccompanied, and dressed very plainly. At the top of Bond Street she called a cab, and gave the man some directions. He drove towards Knightsbridge, and there she got out and dismissed him with double fare, at which he stared in wonder, and expressed an opinion that she was "a stunner."

Alexis then entered the Park by the Albert Gate, and walked slowly along the footpath skirting the Row. It was almost deserted at that early hour, but presently she saw a solitary figure hurrying along, and involuntarily her own steps quickened, and the colour came into her face. It was a slender, shabbily-dressed figure, the face almost hidden by a large shady hat; but Alexis Kenyon seemed to recognise it instinctively, and moving straight towards it, stopped short a few paces off, and spoke out a name.

The face beneath the broad concealing hat was suddenly lifted. The eyes, dark as darkest violets and strangely mournful, even in the startled wonder they expressed, looked straight at her.

"Madame," the girl said faintly, "you . . . I fear you mistake. I have not the honour to know you."

"You are Gretchen von Waldstein, are you not?" demanded her interlocutor.

The fair, sweet face lifted itself up, a

burning wave of colour surged through the delicate skin. "Yes," she answered faintly; "and you, Madame?"

"Who I am matters little just now," was the curt rejoinder. "I have something to say to you, and I must say it. I know you are going to your morning engagement, but that must wait for once. Will you walk with me over there, where it is quiet, under the trees? This road is too public for conversation."

"But," stammered the girl, "what can you have to say to me? I do not even know you."

"My name," said the other, "is Kenyon—Alexis Kenyon. Do you know me now?"

The girl's face grew like marble. A look of terror intense and keen with pain leaped into her lovely eyes. She shrank back as if a blow had struck her, and only gazed speechless and trembling at the cold and perfect beauty of the face before her.

"Come," said Alexis impatiently, and made a gesture in the direction of the trees. "I see you know me. You do not suppose that I should have sought this interview without good reason. Will you hear what I have come to say?"

The girl bent her head submissively. The colour came back to her face in a hot, shamed flood; she felt bewildered—stupefied; a look of intense suffering drew her brows together in a line of pain, and her lips quivered convulsively.

Yet the sign of that suffering awoke no pity in the eyes that read it all too plainly, nor in any way moved that unflinching will which had set itself a task, and was now bent on accomplishing it.

In silence they moved along under the glitter of sunshine, which fell warm and golden with the promise of spring over the bare trees and the green up-springing grass.

There was a seat beneath the trees to which Alexis had directed her steps, and she pointed to it as her eyes turned again to that wan and sad young face.

"Sit down," she said; "it will look less conspicuous."

The girl obeyed in the same dull, automatic manner which had characterised her since she had heard her companion's name.

Alexis Kenyon scanned her with criticism as merciless as it was intent. "She is stupid and sentimental," she said to herself. "What can they have seen in her—those two? She is beautiful, though, or must have been before all this. 'Beauté du diable'—just youth, a skin of milk and roses, and that wonderful German luxuriance of hair."

Aloud she said: "You are wondering how I have discovered you, and what I want—is it not so? Well, in the first place, my cousin has returned from India. Ah, you start. Yes, it is of him I wish to speak. He knows all now; but he does not know where you are, and he is full of some wild idea of seeking you in order that he may atone for the past. Now I am going to speak to you quite frankly, and as a woman can only speak to a woman. Of course I know your story. It is very painful, but its pain has not only affected you, it has covered an ancient and noble name with dishonour; its disgrace killed my father, and owing to his death, I must leave the home I love—for ever. No, do not speak yet, you must hear me first. I do not say that you are to blame altogether, but I do say that it is through you these misfortunes have happened. However, what is done, is done. It is of the future, not of the past that I wish to speak. If my cousin seeks you and finds you, he is determined to make you what you say you believed yourself to be, his wife. Now I tell you that if you allow him to do this, you will be guilty of the worst evil you can inflict upon him. You will ruin his future; you will drag him from the high place his name and fortune have given him as a right; men will laugh at him, and women will say you have made him your dupe; that you courted only his gold and his name, and called it restitution for the wrong he did you in a boy's heedless folly, and a boy's fleeting passion for a fair face. You will make him a jest and a byword, so that he can never live his life out in honour where all his race have lived it. Of myself, I say nothing; the wrong you have both done to me I can forgive, though never now can I become what I was pledged to be. But this is no question of rivalry. Could the past be undone—had you an innocent name and a life without reproach to give him, I would welcome you gladly as his wife. But you know what you have done—and the world knows it, and will never forget it—never, to the last hour you live. For it is always the woman who is blamed, however culpable the man may be."

The rapid, breathless words ceased; she glanced at the face beside her. It might have been carved out of stone, so still, and hard, and colourless it looked. But as her own voice ceased, a sudden light flashed into the sombre eyes, that lifted their gaze to hers; and calmly and gravely the girl

rose to her feet and said with neither haste nor passion: "You need not have taken so much trouble to find me out, only to tell me this. I knew it before ever I saw you. I would not marry your cousin now, though he sought me on his knees throughout the world; though he offered every gift of wealth and rank, which you seem to count as bribes that would tempt me. My own heart told me better than any words of yours what the world would say, but it is not the voice of the world or any human creature that I would heed, if he had only been what I believed him to be. When I knew who it was that I had loved, my punishment began. He may be of great name, or rank, or honour in the eyes of the world—but in mine he has sunk too low for anything but pity. I was only a child, and with all a child's ignorance and trust, and he did me the deadliest wrong that a man holds it in his power to do. He did it remorselessly and without one regret, without even one word of warning. Do you think that now the offer of his name could wipe out the stain on mine; could ever, ever give me back the hope, the peace, the innocence he used to such base advantage? I am not clever. I know nothing of that world where you live, and where he and others like himself can be honoured, and forgiven, where error like mine is called criminal. Perhaps if I possessed its wisdom, your words would not have much effect, for then I should only have thought of what I could gain; not of what I could save others."

Alexis Kenyon listened in wonder, that deepened to reluctant admiration. "No, she is not stupid," she acknowledged in her heart. "But she is unwise. I can never appreciate sacrifices. She believes in romance, and this is what romance has done for her! Will she serve my purpose, I wonder?"

"No doubt," she said at last, "you have been hardly used; but I am glad that you have the good sense to avoid further error. I must tell you, though, that it will need more than a mere resolve on your part to deter my cousin from his project. Have you the courage to put a barrier between yourself and his persuasions? They will be harder to resist than you imagine. He is weak, and ill, and humble; he will appeal to your pity, to your past love. I hardly think you will find strength to say him nay."

Gretchen looked at her wearily; pain and suffering had replaced anger. She

felt exhausted, and the sight of this fair, haughty, insolent woman showed her what a wide distance there was between their lives and rules of action.

"You wish me to do something," she said. "What is it?"

For a moment Alexis Kenyon's eyes sought the ground. She felt shamed and silenced by that calm, heroic face, bearing in every line the seal of past suffering, with all its glorious youth crushed and broken down by the agony of endurance. But the momentary softness passed. She had resolved to conquer, and her will was as iron in comparison to Gretchen's.

"It is not a question of what I wish," she said gravely. "It is rather what your heart should dictate. Remember, I know your whole history. I know that you were destined for conventual life, and that you threw off all obligations without scruple, and that from that date began all your misfortunes. Has it never occurred to you that the duty you disregarded had a claim upon you still?"

Gretchen's face paled to the very lips. Here was some one wiser, cleverer even than Sister Maria, echoing Sister Maria's words.

"You think," she said breathlessly, "that my sin demands such an atonement—"

"I think," said Alexis, "that you should go back to your convent. That is the only real barrier you can set up between yourself and further temptation."

The girl shivered as if with sudden cold. Her eyes looked up at the blue sky, and then grew dim and blind with a rush of tears.

"I would sooner die," she cried passionately. "I know I am disgraced and unhappy; but still, to live like that—"

Alexis Kenyon rose with cold and haughty dignity. "I thought," she said, "your heroism would not stand a test. Death does not come at our wish, and words are easy; it is deeds that prove their worth. Well, there is no more to be said. I merely pointed out a plain case of duty. A nobler and less selfish nature would not have needed even that it should be pointed out. I will not detain you any longer."

She was moving away, but a faint call stayed her.

She paused and looked back.

Gretchen had sunk down on the seat. The pale suffering of her face looked even

more piteous in comparison with the golden warmth and gladness of the young spring day.

"Wait," she called out hoarsely; "you are right. I forgot that I owe you reparation. I must not think of myself. I did you a great wrong, but I did it unconsciously, only that Fate—it is very hard. May I ask counsel of one friend before I decide? He is so wise and noble, he could tell me what was right, and then——"

"No," said Alexis, with sudden passion. "Let your own heart decide. You obeyed its promptings once because they suited your own wishes. If they clash now, at least you know that duty is often hard because it is right. What friend can tell you more? When you are safe within your retreat, then you can write to any one you choose, and tell him your resolution. Now, the very fact of your seeking other counsel shows that you fear your own weakness."

"It is not that," said Gretchen firmly. "You might believe—you might trust me—I would go anywhere—the further the better; but I no longer hold the faith that makes a convent-life possible. I have forsworn it. Its errors, its bigotry, its cruelty, were all explained by——"

"By Mr. Adrian Lyle! Is it not so?" interrupted Alexis scornfully. "Oh, I know him. He has a fancy for making converts. That need not trouble you. He acts for his Church's principles as your priests do for yours. He will tell you one thing to-day and another to-morrow, if it suits his purpose. His faith differs in two essential points from that which you say you have forsworn. Take my advice, and go back to it. The world has treated you very cruelly; it will only treat you worse, the more you cling to it. There are but two refuges where a woman can hide such shame as yours—a convent or a grave. You are too young to hope for the one; but the very injuries you have inflicted on others, the disgrace which clings now, and will cling for ever, to your name, points to that other, which is still open."

The girl looked at her with ever-deepening wonder. In her simple-heartedness, her intense self-reproach, she only saw that she had inflicted a grievous wrong on this proud and beautiful woman. Her very soul was wrung with an agony of remorse.

"I did not know," she cried brokenly. "I would not have wronged you willingly. I see now why he left me—it was you he

loved, and I—I have done you all this harm."

"I have told you," said Alexis coldly, "that it is in your power to make reparation. Why waste more words? You cannot escape his search. I found you, though you deemed yourself safely hidden in this great labyrinth, and so will he find you, though you went to the end of the world. I have put a plain duty before you; it rests with you to fulfil it nobly, or reject it selfishly."

Gretchen listened and trembled. It did not occur to her to say that her rival had only placed the dagger or the poisoned cup before her; that she was cruel beyond all cruelty when she pointed out as "duty" what was merely a safe and easy way of revenging herself for the faithlessness of one man, and the indifference of another. She knew nothing of the real workings of Alexis Kenyon's mind; nothing of the real reasons of her presence here. The passionate generosity of her own nature blinded her to the cold selfishness and the secret jealousy of that other.

A rush of memories, a flood of thoughts, held her dumb and troubled; but the force of resolution was slowly working within her, and something of a martyr's courage was in the young, uplifted face, as she turned it at last to the watchful and intent eyes that were bent upon her.

She rose slowly from her seat; her blood seemed cold within her veins, even as she stood there in the warm glow of the sunlight.

"I will do what you desire," she said calmly. "After all, it is the heart that Heaven reads. I can give that to Him, and serve Him under the garb of any faith."

A flash of triumph lit Alexis Kenyon's eyes. She had conquered. The strong will had bent the weaker to its purpose, and now, come what might, neither Neale Kenyon nor Adrian Lyle should hold it in his power to see her ever again.

"You have decided wisely," she said, "and I trust you; but you must act at once—this very day. You had better write and tell this—lady who employs you, that you must give up your duties, and then you can leave London to-night by the Continental express. I will provide you with means; that need not trouble you, and—what is it?"

Some change, some subtle difference in the girl's face caught her eyes.

"My mother," cried Gretchen suddenly. "Oh, I forgot her. What will she do?"

She loves me so. I am all that she has. It will break her heart if I leave her."

"Your mother?" echoed Alexis. "Is she with you in London?"

"Yes. But she is away all day like myself. She has to work also. Ah, poor mother, how can I tell her? Her heart will break."

"Do not tell her," said Alexis. "Leave it to me. I will break it to her gently and carefully. Then she shall follow you, if you desire. For a year, you know, you will be comparatively free. You can reconcile her to that parting in that time."

The girl looked at her sorrowfully. "You do not know," she said, "how a mother can love. She will not be reconciled. Yes, it is better she should learn the truth from you—a stranger."

"Then," said Alexis rapidly, "I will tell you what to do. Return at once to your lodgings, and put together all you need for your journey. You will go back to Dornbach, will you not? Yes, I thought so. Then come to me here, at my hotel," and she wrote the address on a card from the case she held, "as soon as your preparations are complete. I will myself take you to the station, and see you off. Then I will seek your mother, and tell her what you have decided to do. If she wishes to follow you, she can arrange to give up her rooms; and in two days at latest you can unite."

Gretchen followed the rapid words; the whole conversation had been in her own language, which Alexis Kenyon spoke fluently. If in her heart a little sense of wonder arose at the trouble this stranger was taking for her, she soon put it aside. The dominance of this new resolution crushed out all other considerations.

It was so plainly her duty; and had not Adrian Lyle told her that the very stamp and hall-mark of duty was the hardness and difficulty of fulfilling it?

"Arrange it all as you please, Madame," she said, with a resignation that touched Alexis Kenyon with a momentary sense of compassion. "I have said I will do this, and the sooner I do it, the better."

"And will you promise," said Alexis sternly, "that once the Convent gates at Dornbach have closed upon you, you will never betray where you are, by word or sign, to any living creature?"

"Yes," said Gretchen simply. "What use would it be? No one save my mother will want to know where I am."

"You mistake," answered Alexis. "There is one other——"

"Madame," said the girl, with grave and gentle dignity, "I have told you that nothing will ever induce me to see your cousin again, of my own will. Let that satisfy you."

Alexis Kenyon drew a long, deep breath of relief. "I believe you," she said, "and I trust you. And now till this afternoon, farewell."

Gretchen bent her head. Her eyes had in them a strange look, the look of a soul that has received its death-wound. The bright sunshine seemed to blind her, the sweet, soft air turned her sick and faint. She had promised to say good-bye to all, to take up that death in life, from which she had once so joyously escaped.

But she could never escape again—never. Those grim gates at Dornbach would close only too surely round her now. Yet why should she care? Life for her was over. It had been brief; and yet it had been a failure, terrible to think of. Surely it were better to rest her weary heart, and give her tired and struggling soul to the safe keeping of Heaven. Surely——

But a wave of passionate rebellion cut short the compulsory resignation which she had been striving to accomplish.

"It is hard," her heart cried out. "It is as hard as ever. But I think it would have been easier if I could have seen him just once more—only once."

And a sob rose in her throat, and all the brilliant sky and busy streets grew dark before her eyes.

"He will think me faithless," she thought, "and that all his kind and gentle teaching is lost and valueless; and I can never tell him why I have done this—never. I have given my promise."

And for the first time it seemed to her that that promise had barred the way to a hope too faint for words, but sweet enough to thrill all her pulses with life, and longing, and regrets.

FAIRS, WAKES, AND MOPS.

FAIRS, Wakes, Mops, Rush-bearings, and Village Feasts all belong to the same genus, and are generally believed to be of Saxon origin; but are all, more or less, shrouded by the mists of antiquity.

The old English wake was the equivalent of the ecclesiastical vigil—the eve of a religious festival or holiday. The parish wake was kept in the church, on the an-

niversary of the saint to whom the church was dedicated, and, in the churchyard, tents were erected to supply cakes and ale for the use of the crowd on the morrow's holiday. These wakes, however, soon came to be scenes of indulgence and riot; and from the time of Edward the First to that of Henry the Eighth, a long string of statutes was passed, forbidding convivial meetings and fairs in the churchyards.

Church ales were amongst the enormities inveighed against by Stubbs in his "Anatomy of Abuses;" and even at the present day, in remote country parishes, the phantom of a wake, wholly unsanctioned by the church, puts in, once a year, a pale and fitful appearance.

In Italy these festivals were introduced about the year 500 A.D., and, according to Spellman, in England, by Alfred, about 886. In opposition to this theory, however, we have a letter sent by Pope Gregory, 595 A.D., to the Abbot Mollitus, then going into Britain, in which he says:

"When Almighty God shall bring you to the Most Reverent Bishop Augustine, our brother, tell him what I have, upon mature deliberation on the affairs of the English, determined upon, viz, that the temples of the idols ought not to be destroyed, but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let holy water be made and sprinkled in the said temples; let altars be erected and relics placed; and if those temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of idols to the service of the true God; that the natives, seeing that their temples are not destroyed may remove error from their hearts, and, knowing and adoring the true God, may the more familiarly resort to the places to which they have been accustomed. And, because they have been used to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifices to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for them on this account, as that on the Day of Dedication of the Nativities of the Holy Martyrs, whose relics are there deposited; they may build themselves huts, of the boughs of trees, about those churches which have been turned to the use from temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer beasts to the devil, but kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating, and return thanks to the giver of all things for their sustenance, to the end that, whilst some gratifications are out-

wardly permitted them, they may the more easily consent to the inward consolations of the grace of God, for there is no doubt that it is impossible to efface everything at once from them obdurate; because he who endeavours to ascend to the highest place rises by degrees or steps, and not by leaps. . . . God preserve you in safety, most beloved son. Given the seventeenth day of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our lord the most pious Emperor Mauritius Tiberius, the eighteenth after the consulship of our said lord. The fourth indication."

Whether this letter had the effect of establishing fairs or not—I am inclined to think it had—it is certain that wakes were established by an order of Gregory the Seventh, about 1078, and termed *Feriae*, at which the monks celebrated the festival of their patron saint. The vast resort of people occasioned a great demand for goods, wares, etc.

Fairs were established in France about the year 800, by Charlemagne; and encouraged in England by William the Conqueror—1066–87. Many statutes were made for the regulation of fairs (1328–1868.) The "Fairs Act," 1871, provides for the abolition of fairs under certain conditions.

In all parts of the country these fairs were the great market days of the year; indeed, all fairs were originally markets—a sort of commercial rendezvous rendered necessary by the sparseness of the population and the paucity of business. Merry-making and shows were only the incidental accompaniments of these events. Now that the population is dense and commercial communications of all kinds are active and easy, the country fair is no longer a necessity.

At one time the gentlefolk of the Manor House thought it not beneath them to come down into the streets, crowded as they were, and give their countenance to the festivities. Arm-in-arm the squire and his dame, with other members of his family, would move in a dignified manner through the fair, receiving universal homage as a reward for the sympathy they thus showed with the needs and enjoyments of their inferiors.

All over the North of England these fairs are popular institutions still, and, over one hundred years ago, they were the only real holidays of the simple-minded rustics.

It was then, as it is now, one of the

misfortunes of the lowly, that, bound down to monotonous toil the greater part of their lives, they can scarcely enjoy an occasional day of relaxation without falling into excesses. Let us hope that in time there will be more frequent and more liberal intervals of relaxation for the sons of the soil, and consequently less tendency to go beyond reasonable bounds in merry-making.

Feats of strength and dexterity came to be one of the accustomed features at the fairs, and old scores were settled on such occasions. There were no prizes offered for skill in husbandry as now, and free fights between rival husbandmen, boxing matches, and contentions with the quarter-staff were to be seen as the concomitants of a fair. By this most doubtful means the question of superiority was definitely settled. The least remembered of these trials of skill and strength is probably the quarter-staff. Contentions with the quarter-staff take their place among the old amusements of the people of England, rather rough for the taste of the present day, yet innocent in comparison with other sports of our forefathers. The weapon, if indeed it be worthy of such a term—perhaps it would better be called an implement—was a tough piece of wood, of about eight feet long, not of great weight, which the practitioner grasped in the middle with one hand, while with the other he kept a loose hold between the middle and one end. An adept in the use of the staff might be, to one less skilled, a formidable opponent. Dryden speaks of the use of the quarter-staff in a manner which would imply that in his time, when not in use, the weapon was slung upon the back :

His quarter-staff, which he could ne'er forsake,
Hung half before and half behind his back.

Up to almost the close of the last century games or matches at cudgels were of frequent occurrence, and public subscriptions were entered into for the purpose of finding the necessary funds to provide prizes.

Men at these meetings often won their sweethearts by the dexterity they displayed in the use of the cudgel or quarter-staff. Mr. E. Budgell, writing one hundred and fifty years since of a Yorkshire wake, says : "I found a ring of cudgel players, who were breaking one another's heads, in order to make some impression on their mistresses' hearts. I observed a lusty young fellow who had the misfortune of a broken pate, but what considerably added

to the anguish of his wound was his over-hearing of an old man, who shook his head, and said that he questioned now if Kate Black would marry him these three years. I observed a young girl, who was posted on an eminence at some distance from me, making so many odd grimaces, and writhing and distorting her whole body in so strange a manner, as made me desirous to know the meaning of it. Upon coming up to her, I found that she was overlooking a ring of wrestlers, and that her sweetheart, a man of small stature, was contending with a big, brawny fellow, who twirled him about and shook the little man so violently, that, by a secret sympathy of hearts, it produced all these agitations in the person of his mistress, who, I dare say, like Celia, in *Shakespeare*, on the same occasion could have wished herself invisible, to catch the strong fellow by the leg. The Squire of the parish treats the whole company every year to a hogshead of ale ; and proposes a beaver hat to him who gives the most falls. In short, I found men endeavoured to show the women they were no cowards, and that the whole company strived to recommend themselves to each other by making it appear that they were all in a perfect state of health, and fit to undergo any fatigue of bodily labour."

For centuries mountebanks were most prominent personages at fairs and wakes, taking up their stand in prominent places where the crowd was sure to be the thickest. They were men of boundless wit and extraordinary impudence. One such styled himself "Magnifico Smokentissimo Custardissimo Astrologissimo Cunningmanissimo Rabbiniissimo Viro Jacko Adams de Clerkenwell Greno hanc Lovellissimani sui Picturam." Another, as may be seen from an old broad-sheet in the British Museum, was wont to inform the gaping crowds ready to be gulled, that

Thousands I've dissected,
Thousands new erected,
And such cures effected
As none e'er can tell.
Let the palae shake ye ;
Let the chollick rack ye ;
Let the crinkum break ye ;
Let the murrain take ye ;
Take this and you are well.

The cures they effected were only equalled in their extraordinary character by the compounds they dispensed. Our forefathers must have been filled to the full with simple faith to judge by the manner in which the compounds of nastiness, harmless enough it is true, found ready purchasers.

Fairs were occasionally granted to towns as a means of enabling them to recover from the effects of war and other disasters, and also as a mark of favour from the Crown. Thus Edward the Third founded a fair in Burnley, Lancashire.

Charters were also granted for charitable purposes, since we find from ancient records that Stourbridge Fair, once perhaps, next to Coventry, the largest fair in the world, was specially granted by King John for the maintenance of a hospital for lepers. Charters were granted in many other places for a similar purpose.

Efforts have from time to time been made to put down these annual gatherings, but the strong opposition with which the proposals have been met in some places has led to the abandonment of like attempts. It is still rather a vexed question whether feasts should or should not cease to exist, and much may be said on both sides in support of the respective opinions. Sure, however, it is that the abolition of the feast would deprive many thousands of people of amusement which is harmless enough in itself. It must be recollected, too, that the people who have only the opportunity of enjoying this one day's recreation out of the monotonous round of three hundred and sixty-five, are not such as can appreciate art in its highest degree, hence the amusement provided for their delectation must be such as they can enter into with a degree of sympathetic feeling. There is another point to be looked at—in consequence of the vocations which the majority of these people follow, they are, by force of circumstances, debarred from seeing their relatives and friends during the year, so that at least on this one day out of the twelve months an opportunity should be afforded them of meeting together.

About the introduction of rush-bearings there is no doubt whatever; it is an institution of more ancient date. Rushes were employed at a period anterior to the introduction of carpets, to strew upon the floor, and, according to the Rev. G. M. Cooper (1857), the strewing of churches grew up into a religious festival, when "young women, dressed in white and carrying garlands of flowers and rushes, walked in procession to the Parish Church, accompanied by a crowd of rustics, with flags flying and music playing. There they suspend their floral chaplets on the chancel rails, and the day is concluded

with a simple feast." The introduction of carpets and matting did away with the necessity for employing rushes; but the holding of the feast is still maintained in many places, principally in the North of England.

Such is a brief account of these annual occurrences, but as no account of fairs would be complete without a reference to Donnybrook Fair, which, at one time, was the greatest institution in Ireland, and was the scene of more broken heads and faction fights than the whole of the other fairs in Ireland put together. Let us quote Professor Dowden's remarks on Donnybrook: "Here are," he says, "tents formed of long wattles, in two rows, inclined together at the top, over which, for covering, are spread patchwork quilts, winnowing sheets, rugs, blankets, and old petticoats, secured by ropes of hay. A broom-head or well-worn brush, a watchman's discarded lantern, surmounted by variegated rags torn to ribbons, serve the purpose of a tavern's ivy bush; a rusty saucepan or old pot, signifies that eating as well as drinking may be had. Down the middle, what a day since had been doors, and now are tables, rest on mounds of clay, and benches, swaying under the sitters when their equilibrium becomes uncertain, run along, supported in like manner. 'When the liquor got the mastery of one convivial fellow,' says Sir Josiah, 'he would fall off, and the whole row generally followed his example; perhaps ten or even twenty shillelagh boys were seen on their backs, kicking up their heels, some able to get up again, some lying quiet and easy, singing, or roaring, or laughing, or cursing; while others, still on their legs, were drinking, and dancing, and setting the whole tent in motion, till all began to long for open air, and a little wrestling, leaping, cudgelling, or fighting upon the green grass. The tent was then cleared out and prepared for another company.' A delightful aroma, compounded of mingled turf, whiskey, steaming potatoes, Dublin Bay herrings, salt beef, and cabbages filled the air. At dusk a dozen fiddlers would strike up, and a row of perhaps a hundred couples work away at their jig steps till they actually fell off breathless. Matrons would bring the 'children' to this paradise of cakes and simple toys, and these infantine revellers would assist the musicians with popgun, and drum, and whistle. Under the summer moon, young men and maidens would

utter their vows, and fix the day for going before Father Kearney, who declared 'more marriages were celebrated in Dublin the week after Donnybrook Fair than any other two months during the rest of the year.'

In the Broadgate at Lincoln, there was formerly held a fair for the sale of cattle, which was known as "All Fools' Fair." It is recorded that the cause for the application of this not very flattering name was, that King William the First with his Queen visited Lincoln, where he was right royally treated by the citizens. As some recompense for their hospitality, he offered to serve them in any way they liked best. The citizens asked for a fair to be held annually on the fourteenth of September. This date is in the middle of harvest, when few people could attend, and, moreover, the City had no trade or manufacture likely to benefit from such an institution. The King granted the request, nevertheless, and the period of the year at which the fair was held, obtained for it the unique appellation "All Fools' Fair."

Fairs were formerly held in the North of England, called "Honey Fairs," at which various kinds of green stuff were served out to all comers.

At Glenfield, Leicestershire, the parish clerk, in accordance with an old custom, strewed the church in Edward's time with new hay on the first Sunday after the fifth of July in each year. This is probably a remnant of the ancient English practice of strewing the floors not only of charities, but of dwelling-houses also, with hay, straw, or rushes.

At many places the fairs were and are still opened, by displaying a gigantic glove from some conspicuous place. The origin of this custom cannot now be very accurately ascertained; but it is probable that, before charters were granted, the King sent a glove as his warrant for the holding of a fair. The "*Speculum Saxonicum*," in support of this theory, says: "No one is allowed to set up a market or mint without the consent of the ordinary and judge of the place; the King ought also to send a glove as a sign of his consent to the same." The lowering of the glove marked the termination of the fair.

Formerly a fair at Liverpool was thus opened, and while the glove was exposed in front of the Town Hall, all persons coming to the fair were perfectly safe from any danger of being arrested for debt.

Anciently at Paignton, Essex, on the

annual fair day, a custom prevailed of drawing through the town a plum-pudding of immense proportions, which was afterwards cut up and distributed to the crowd. The pudding, which weighed near upon a thousand pounds, occupied three days and three nights in the boiling. It was placed upon a car profusely decorated with evergreens, and drawn along the streets by eight oxen.

There were customs attending the opening of fairs, known as walking and riding the fair. These were in all probability a remnant of the Corpus Christi pageantry frequently celebrated at the yearly fairs. In each case the processionists dressed in masquerade.

In Worcestershire, there is a common belief that the cuckoo will never be heard until Tenbury Fair, or after Pershore Fair day, June twenty-sixth.

In various parts of the country different customs prevailed with reference to the opening and holding of fairs, some of which are still maintained, though their significance has been lost. As relics of antiquity they are still interesting; but it is doubtful if those to whom the forms and ceremonies are common, ever bestow a thought on their why and wherefore.

AGAINST WOMAN.

I SUPPOSE that, of all men, the vivisectionist is he who best knows how to coerce his natural sympathies. And yet he is more often than not a person of the tenderest sensibility, who would consider that man a dastard who caused pain for his own pleasure, or his own exclusive profit.

On similar grounds, the writer of this paper has something in common with the vivisectionist. For he proposes in cold blood to bring forward an array of utterances, from the lips of notable men, in humiliation of the softer sex. He himself, however, is merely the advocate conducting the case—a being presumably indifferent to the suffering his words may cause, so long as he does his best for his clients. He is willing enough to admit that noble women are as plentiful as noble men; that able women are as numerous as the blades of grass in a meadow; and that gentle women, thank Heaven! are still to be found. But we live in a time of peculiar fermentation and mental excitement; too many of our sisters and daughters are

carried away by a whirlwind of inordinate self-esteem that bids fair to sweep all happiness out of their lives; and there is no arguing, from present postulates, how society will be constituted thirty or fifty years hence. Under these circumstances, the writer dares to run a tilt against the reputed universal excellence of women.

Why, in the first place, are so very many marriages unfortunate? For two reasons: First, because the woman seldom thinks it needful to try and understand the mind of the man who is to be her husband; and, secondly, because, as a rule, she is quite incapable of fully or sympathetically understanding the mind of her husband, or any other man. He is a sealed book to her, and, at the best, the covers are what she most appreciates. Well for him, therefore, if he quickly reconciles himself to these necessary conditions of matrimony! But to many men this state of affairs is soon intolerable. Hence it is that, as good comes from evil, so, if a searching inquisition were made into the domestic lives of those men who, by the exercise of their talents, have deserved well of their country, an astonishing number of such men would be found either to have made unhappy marriages, to have forsworn marriage, or to have had unwise or cruel parents. So strongly is the man who is infelicitous in private life compelled to seek compensation elsewhere! So bitter and yet keen a training-school for the intellect, or the tools of the intellect, is the arena of the hearth! So profound is the self-knowledge thus rudely got, and hence the capacity for knowing and gauging others!

"Being once accustomed to bear the unhappy temper of Xantippe," says Socrates, "I believed myself armed at all points against inconvenience from the manners and talk of other people."

And many besides Socrates are indebted for the apparent invincibility of their good temper to the perpetual shocks of bad temper which assail them in their home life; though few, like Socrates, can so steel themselves spiritually against the corroding influence of such attacks as to be able, in spite of them, to affirm that their lives are "surpassingly happy."

Samuel Johnson, whose circumstances and temperament made him perforce a constant exponent of the ills of life, was surely reasonable when he wrote that:

"The freaks, and humours, and spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil

families in discord and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many centuries."

"Would to the gods every tree bore such fruit!" exclaimed Diogenes, when he saw a woman hanging dead from the bough of a tree. It is a pity, however, that we do not know enough of the surly cynic to hark back to the cause of his peculiar hatred of the sex.

But it is a curious fact that in old times, when the nature of women was not so very different from their nature now, though their position, social and civic, was, of course, vastly different, women were almost universally condemned out of hand for their radical frivolity. Even the Northmen, who held their women in uncommon regard, had little faith in them. They believed them to be virtuous because the penalties of viciousness were so ruthless, not because they had any innate love of virtue:

"Praise the fineness of the day when it is ended; a woman when you have known her; a sword when you have proved it; a maiden after she is married. . . . Trust not to the words of a girl, neither to those which a woman utters; for their hearts have been made like the wheel that turns round; levity was put into their bosoms. . . . He who would make himself beloved of a maiden must entertain her with fine discourses, and offer her engaging presents; he must also incessantly praise her beauty. . . ."

So says the "Havamaal, or Sublime Discourse of Odin," a work contemporary with the "Eddaa."

"Why have men beards?" asked Schopenhauer, only the other day. "To conceal their mouths," he replied, "which would else betray the emotion of their minds and leave them defenceless to their enemies." "And why, then, are women without beards?" "Because they do not need them for such a purpose; dissimulation being inborn with them."

Leopardi, also a writer of our century, is as merciless as Schopenhauer:

"A woman's nature is rarely to be compared with that with which her lover endows her in his fancy. Thoughts like our thoughts have no place behind her narrow brows. Vain is the hope that man forges in the fire of her sparkling eyes. He errs in seeking profound and elevated thoughts in one who is naturally inferior to man in all things. As her

members are frailer and softer, so is her mind more feeble and restricted."

"In every circumstance women are weak," says Goethe, in *Wilhelm Meister*.

One can hardly agree with Goethe here; but his words will help us to understand the motive which impels Mrs. E. Lynn Linton—a true progressionist of our day—to resist the efforts of those ladies who are for urging the members of their sex into hot competition with men in all the business of life. Mrs. Linton warns the world that woman is a terrible despot; and, indeed, we all know that the tyranny of a weak tyrant is the worst conceivable of tyrannies.

"All women are plaguy and proud; and were men quit of the sex, their lives would probably be less ungodly," said sturdy Cato, the mouthpiece of unvarnished sentiment in his time. The words of the censor Metellus Macedonicus are also worth recording. "If we could, O citizens, we would all keep clear of this burden (marriage). But as nature has so arranged it that we cannot live comfortably with wives, or live at all without them, it is proper to have regard rather to the permanent weal than to our own brief comfort."

Not all Romans, however, were to be wheedled into matrimony by such blunt argument as this of Macedonicus. And, later, the insurrection against what John Knox would call "the monstrous regimen of women," rose to such a pitch that bachelors were persecuted by the State, and even married men, without children, were looked upon suspiciously, and robbed of half the amount of their legacies; while, directly and indirectly, a bounty was, at the same time, put upon fruitful alliances. Nevertheless, all things considered, a Roman of the Augustan Era cannot be deemed foolish or cowardly for accepting the burdens of his bachelorhood, rather than venture upon the unknown evils of marriage. "Speech becomes more measured as manners become depraved: we think to gain in language what we lose in virtue." This dictum of Voltaire's is singularly applicable to the golden era of letters.

Recurring briefly to the early Greeks, Simonides of Amorgos may be quoted for this virulence against the sex. "Zeus," he says, "made this supreme evil, women. Even though they seem to be of good, when a man has got one, she becomes a plague." In his satire on women, Simonides classifies them as from ten

different origins. "In the beginning, God made the souls of the womankind out of different materials," the swine, the fox, the dog, the earth, the sea, the ass, the cat, the mare, the ape, and, lastly, the bee. For this ninety per cent. of gall he partly atones, when he adds that, "a man cannot possess anything better than a good woman, nor anything worse than a bad one."

This reminds us of our Elizabethan Burleigh's warning to his son, when the boy was thinking of matrimony. "Thou shalt find there is nothing so irksome in life as a female fool." Perhaps the statesman had not found as much satisfaction in the boy's mother as his success in public life ought to have stimulated her into affording him.

Barely a century after Simonides, another Greek, Hipponas of Ephesus, brutally affirms that "a woman gives but two days of happiness to man, the day of her bridal and her burial." Plato also, though his authority as an evolutionist does not stand high, derives all animals from man, by successive degradations, on the first step of which stands woman. This recalls the whimsical saying of a modern that, "when the universe and man were created, the edifice of creation was completed. It lacked only the weathercock; so God made woman."

Matter, too soft a lasting mark to bear,
And best distinguished by black, brown, or fair,
in the words of Alexander Pope.

But when Pope proceeds to say that "every woman is at heart a rake," much as this agrees with Samuel Johnson's opinion that "women envy us our vices," one is fain to remember De Quincey's trenchant but sound verdict upon him, that: "Pope, in too many instances, for the sake of some momentary and farcical effect, deliberately assumes the license of a liar." One may more readily sympathise with the German Richter's judgement in opposition to Pope and Johnson on this particular point. "A woman had much virtue, but not many virtues; she requires a confined sphere and social forms."

It has been cruelly said that "marriage is the beginning and the end of all culture." Perhaps it was on the strength of this conviction that Robespierre determined to have nothing to do with marriage. "I will never marry," said he, as his sole contribution to the talk during a dinner party at which Louis Philippe was present. He was a taciturn man, who spoke weightily when he spoke at all; and if one cannot

call him a great man in the truest sense of the word, he was certainly at one time a man of importance. Unhappily, Robespierre was a coward. Probably the ladies, as well as himself, knew this; and such a trait in his character was as little likely to recommend him to their hearts as his face itself. His pronounced aversion for matrimony may, therefore, have been nothing but an astute confession that the grapes out of his reach were very sour.

Gregory, of Nyssa, though a man of a class who could hardly otherwise have been in sympathy with Robespierre, was as strongly opposed to matrimony, though on more unselfish grounds. "Marriage," says he, "is the general prologue to all the tragedies of life."

Many a man of genius has shunned matrimony no less persistently than Robespierre or Gregory of Nyssa; but for other reasons. Heaven gives us illusions to cheer us on our way through life, and the chiefest and brightest of these illusions is woman! Therefore the man who cherishes his imagination as the sweetest solace of his being had better not marry. For "the kingdom of marriage is a land which many look at from the outside and long to enter, while many more who live within the realm would fain be outside it."

This realm is the one realm at present wherein the power of woman is indubitable, and yet it ought to suffice her. For, from the days of Lucian—who pronounced the opinion that the lot of woman was preferable to that of man, because the woman rules the man when married to him—to the days of Mrs. Proudie, the conjugal sway has stood firm. A tyranny is strong in proportion to the fewness of those who compose it. Hence we may understand Goethe's words that "married women, if they have no particular love for one another, yet are tacitly in league together, especially against young girls."

As a test, we may ask what men are most successful with women? Men of generous and lofty minds, or demeanour as generous as their minds? Surely not. For the very tenderness of a gentle man is often peculiarly repellent to a woman. The complexity of nature, moreover, that is characteristic of genius, is as objectionable to her as an insoluble puzzle. It reminds her of her own limitations. She sighs straightway for the coarse and unmistakeable adorations of a being who is distinctly of clay like herself. As Balzac says: "In a man of talent a woman sees

but the faults, in a fool but the good qualities." The author of "Van Artevelde" draws similar conclusions:

When we think upon it
How like flattering is woman's love,
Given commonly to whose'er is nearest
And propped with most advantage.

No wonder such a man as Washington Irving was content to live out his days in the deliberate resolve not to submit to disillusionment in this particular.

"Heavens!" he wrote in one of his letters, "what power women would have over us, if they knew how to sustain the attractions which Nature has bestowed upon them, and which we are so ready to assist by our imagination. For my part, I am superstitious in my admiration of them, and like to walk in a perpetual delusion, decking them out as divinities; I thank no one to undeceive me and to prove that they are mere mortals."

Tasso, in his wiser moments, found as much pleasure in his fancy as Washington Irving; but he always shrank back into himself, tearful and heartbroken, after personal intercourse with the Leonora of his affections.

For very many centuries it has been the fashion to give women credit for the exercise of their remarkable faculty of self-sacrifice. They have such a faculty; there can be no doubt about that. Myriads of men have had cause to hold myriads of women in the tenderest reverence for their noble self-forgetfulness. But, on the other hand, this gift is often fatally misused and misunderstood. A woman at her best is not so generous as a man at his best. It is because she has the more incomplete knowledge of human nature. Nevertheless it is a strong defect in her.

It is oftener kinder to be reasonable than self-sacrificial; and yet many a woman is self-sacrificial because this is easier for her than to be reasonable. Not a little pride-spiritual goes ordinarily with what is supposed to be self-sacrifice; and by such sentiment the self-sacrifice is of course much tarnished. In fact, there is a sad amount of subtle egotism and cruel thoughtlessness that passes current in the world for woman's unselfishness. J. S. Mill was more condemnatory of women than he had any idea of being when he argued that this faculty of theirs was an unnatural development due to circumstances.

"To restrain the volubility of the

female tongue," says Miss Ferrier, "is a task that has hitherto defied the power of man."

This statement, interesting in the mouth of a woman, is yet palpably erroneous. "Now defies," were fitter than "has hitherto defied." And with this enormously important addendum, that, whereas formerly a certain license of chatter was allowed to women in consideration of their more sedentary lives—nowadays they not only chatter irresponsibly as before, but presume to reflect the act in matters which used to concern the male sex only.

It is probable that many a man with a heart not prematurely stony, has envied Byron's Greek servant in Spain, who boasted of his wife that "she never sits nor speaks in any presence unless I give her permission." Perhaps such a wife would seem a little too much of a slave; but often a man's choice lies between two extremes, neither very comfortable!

"You must consult the taste of women in natural things," says Rousseau, "such as depends on the determination of the senses. Men, you are to consult in moral matters which are more dependent on the understanding." But Rousseau is by this time as traditional as the flood. Indicate, if you can, any matter of the understanding, in which women are not now eagerly aspiring to be as energetic as the men, whether by nature fitted or unfitted for such activity.

In old times, the Amazons seem to have been the surprising exceptions to the general rule about the physical duty of women. This duty, to speak bluntly, was to be the mother of babies, and to cook the dinner.

"Tell me," said someone to Napoleon (certainly an authority on human nature), "what woman you most esteem."

"The one with the greatest number of children," replied this modern Pagan, this ruthless destroyer of grown men.

Yet, in the fanciful picture of society in the future, surely the man who foretold that woman should one day marshal armies, and capture continents at their head, would not be conspicuously imbecile, howsoever fighting may disaccord with the tendency of the higher intellectual education of the sex. There is really no reason in life why Captain Mary Jones, of the Salvation Army in 1887, may not in 1900 be Captain Mary Jones in the regulars.

Be that what it may, it will not be the fault of the lady organisers of our schools and gymnasia, if their younger sisters do

not ultimately develope into fine muscular antagonists for men. Lawn-tennis carried to excess, pedestrianism, dumb bells, and wrestling will probably eventuate in boxing, and so forth; so that we may as well at once conjure up a twentieth-century palaestra, and shrug our shoulders in pity for those who are to come after us.

And do but mark this—men who are intuitively logical, see with sorrow the ruin that is brooding over home-life as a result of this anarchy of notions, and craze for "rights"; whereas the very women who are active in urging forward the independence of their sex, without their surpassing vivacity and sensibility, have no definite idea whither their energies are driving them. It is undoubtedly the spinsters who are mainly at fault. Cheated of the domestic rule for which they have longed in vain, they seek at all costs to become important in other ways. They have lost hope of holding individual men in stern legitimate chains. "Let us then see what we can do for the enthralment of men as a whole!" they say among themselves. They are conscious of a deficiency in themselves, and, with dire and malignant intentions, they strive to prepare the young of their own sex for a like consciousness. Alas! it is but too probable that, a hundred years to come, the body politic and social may be susceptible of two grand divisions: men and married women as opposed to spinsters, muscular spinsters. Remembering the physical training to which our girls are now subjected, who can dare to say how the struggle that must come about sooner or later will terminate?

Someone has classified women under two headings—the beautiful and the good. The distinction may be too absolute, but it is certain that the wise man would rather admire than marry a beautiful woman. And it is no less certain that many men who have married women remarkable for their devotion, have with sorrow seen an extraordinary change in their wives soon after marriage. In such a case, the woman may not scruple to explain this change as due to the novel and jarring circumstances of married life. But she will not be saved by such sophistry. The father of the Jesuits knew all about it when he made it a rule of his life "that familiarity with all women ought to be avoided, even with the most devout; that the most innocent commerce with them, if it wound not our conscience, leaves some stain upon our

reputation, and the smoke blackens, though the fire does not burn us."

It has been said that the beautiful woman is a book containing only a single page, which may be read at a glance; whereas the woman who is both beautiful and good is a book of many pages, proper perusal of which exacts a lifetime. It may be so; but why is it that women of the latter uncommon type always survive their husbands or series of husbands?

Enough, however. It will be sufficiently evident from these few pages, that women have always been esteemed as an amiable blunder, and are likely to be the cause of incredibly bitter blundering in the future. While there is time, let us entreat their leaders to look whither they are going. To the men of this generation, happily, it matters but little. For

When all is thought and said,
The heart still overrules the head:
Still what we hope we must believe,
And what is given us receive.

We are thus assured of a measure of domestic happiness in our lives.

But, oh ye stern maidens, to whom your fair and youthful sisters look for guidance and instruction, we beseech you to have mercy on the men of the future!

LINNÆUS.

THE other day, a young lady took up Mrs. Caddy's book from my drawing-room table, and, turning over the pages, asked: "Who was Linnæus?" "Oh, don't you know?" replied her sister, "he was a German who was so poor that he used to mend his shoes with brown paper; and, by-and-by, when he came to England, as all those Germans do, and saw the furze in bloom, he went down on his knees and thanked God for having made such a beautiful flower."

Sister number one confided to me that the Latin termination had deceived her. She forgot that from Paracelsus down to Curtius, the German, who is the greatest living authority about old Greece, Teutons have affected Latin endings to their names, even when, they did not, like Melancthon, translate them into one of the classical tongues. And the Swedes, who are Teutons, are specially fond of Latin name-endings. Dean Celsius, Linnæus's first friend, and Dr. Moræus, his wife's father, are only two out of many. Another college friend was Menander, a name which

takes us back to Greek comedy. But in Sweden, no noble name ever ends that way. As soon as the great naturalist was made a "Knight of the Polar Star," he dropped the Latin termination and began to be called Carl von Linné.

I suppose these classical forms were affected by the scholars as a set-off against their humble position and small emoluments. "Any small descendant of a piratical viking looks down on us; but poor though we are, we belong to the great commonwealth of letters," that would be the way a Swedish parson would look at the matter; and the fact that so many of the higher clergy bore these ignoble names proves that, there as elsewhere, the Church was largely officered from what we call the lower classes.

Well, the ladies of whom I spoke, are both tolerably good florists and know something of botany; and, because I fear that a good many people, who have been to school since the good old custom of learning Mangnall's Questions was given up, are just as ignorant as they were, therefore it may be worth while to see what Mrs. Caddy says about this father of modern natural history.

In January, 1778, von Linné, more than seventy years old, was buried in Upsala Cathedral; the whole University formed his funeral procession—sixteen Doctors of Physic, all old pupils, held the pall.

Nearly fifty years before, Linnæus, son of the Rector of Stenbrohult, in Småland (born at Råshult, while his father was Curate), migrated from Lund University to Upsala, with eight pounds (two hundred copper dollars), in his pocket, "the poorest student who ever entered her walls."

Happily he was a lad of elastic temperament, popular, open-handed, good-humoured, and with a wonderful gift of pleasant speech, and a determination to make his way.

This had led him to change his University. He had been comfortably settled at Lund. Dr. Stobæus—in whose house he lived, and whose skill had saved his life when he was attacked by that flesh-burrowing worm, not uncommon in East Sweden, which he afterwards named "*furia infernalis*"—talked of making him his heir; but Upsala was a better school for medicine and botany, therefore to Upsala he would go.

"But what'll you live on, Carl?" asked his mother, from whom he inherited his love of flowers.

"Never fear, mother, I'll work my way."

He believed in himself; and he and his friend Arctedius divided between them the whole realm of Nature: the latter going in for fishes, Linnæus as yet confining himself to plants and insects. Poverty disciplined them; their empty purses forbade indulgence; and the habit of admiring the great works of Nature gave beauty of expression to their handsome features.

A striking pair; yet, when the long winter came, and no scholarships and no pupils to help them through, Carl might well quote his native proverb: "Put a Smålander on a barren rock in the sea, and he'll manage to make his living;" but, after all, philosophy, though much, is not bread and butter. "Nothing like poverty for strengthening the character;" "many things are more precious than a full stomach" were some of their attempts at consolation.

Carl was proud of his good looks, so was Arctedius; yet they were glad to wear cast-off clothes; and it was during this winter that the shoe-mending took place, to which, in his installation speech, in 1741, when he had blossomed out as Professor, Linnæus thus referred:

"I put cards and pasteboard into the worn-out shoes given me by my comrades, and mended them carefully with birch bark; for boots cost nine copper dollars, and strong shoes five, and my purse was empty."

His special trouble was that in the winter in Sweden you want a reading-lamp in the daytime, and he could buy neither oil nor candles. For warmth, he sat by the stove-hole fire of the winter plant-house, munching his rye-biscuit, which in the more genial months had been seasoned with some of the fish that Arctedius caught.

At last the winter was over, and the Scandinavian summer came in all at once. But you must eat even in fine weather when the day lasts nearly twenty-one hours; and there is a limit to the lodging-letter's patience. Linnæus begged for the post of under-gardener to the University. Professor Rudbeck, who had slighted him before, said:

"No; but I think you deserve a higher station."

Just then came the bitterest humiliation of all, when Rosen—his rival at Lund, who some time before had been appointed adjunctus (Assistant Lecturer) in the Faculty of Medicine, and was now going abroad (according to the Swedish rule), to travel

and take his Doctor's degree—left him a suit of clothes as a parting gift.

"I would rather die than put them on," cried Linnæus in a rage; though Rosen meant kindly, for the Swedes are so polite that no one dreamed of sneering at him because of his shabby coats or birch-bark boots. For a while he lost heart, and would have gone home and settled to a trade, only he was so deeply in debt that he could not leave Upsala.

Just now, however, it seemed as if he must run away; but first he must take a last look at his favourite Botanic Gardens, and there, walking round, he saw a plant in flower that he had never yet seen in blossom.

"I'll cut it as a last specimen for my herbarium, and then I'll go," he soliloquised.

"You will do no such thing. Don't touch the flower," cried the Divinity Professor, who had been listening behind a hedge.

He was Dean Celsius, a man of wider views than his colleagues, whose return from a long absence Linnæus had been earnestly expecting, intending to lay before him the ideas on system-making which were already simmering in his brain. Now, however, it was not encouragement in his theories, but actual bread that he wanted.

"And what do you know about plants, young would-be thief!" asked the Dean. "And what sort of a herbarium have you got?"

Linnæus named, according to Tournefort, the latest authority, the plants which Celsius pointed out, and astonished that dignitary by saying he had over six hundred Swedish plants in his collection.

"Come and see mine, then," said the Dean, astonished at the lad's wide knowledge and glowing enthusiasm, and struck at the same time with the hungry look and threadbare clothes of one whose graceful bearing and exquisite personal cleanliness stamped him as a gentleman. "Soap costs little and water nothing in Sweden, and manners come by nature," is Mrs. Caddy's comment. "All the rags in Upsala could not disguise the refinement of this young man, refined by loving all things lovely."

Before long Linnæus was an inmate of Celsius's house, teaching his younger children, and helping him in his great work, "*Hierobotanicon: the Plants mentioned in Scripture.*" This work made Linnæus ambitious of himself becoming an author. He knew Tournefort, who classified

plants by form ; but in Celsius's library, he met Vaillant's little treatise on the sexes of plants (the book that set the elder Darwin writing "The Loves of the Flowers"), and to this doubtless was due his arrangement according to the numbers of stamens and pistils. Those Frenchmen ! —we seldom give them the credit they deserve. They were generally in those days first in everything. Thus in this case, Vaillant, Lewis the Fourteenth's botanist, gave the first inkling of the Linnæan system ; Linnæus perfected that system ; and then the French invented that "natural system," which has now pretty well driven out the Linnæan.

The idea was in the air. "Nuptiæ Arborum," was the title of a disputation held before Bishop Wahlen. "De Nuptiis Plantarum" was a treatise published by the Bishop's son, Librarian of the University. Linnæus at once wrote his first tract, proposing their sexual arrangements as the basis of classification for plants ; and at last Dr. Rudbeck—whom its patronage by the Wahlen, father and son, had forced to recognise the importance of the subject—was graciously pleased to find that Linnæus showed genius.

Rudbeck was an original thinker. After reading Linnæus's treatise, he was struck with its originality, and invited the young naturalist to read his lectures for him (he was seventy, and almost confined to the house). All Upsala flocked to hear Linnæus ; and pupils came, and with them money enough not only for food, but to buy the fine dress to which the handsome youth was by no means indifferent.

The Wrede Exhibition, too, though only worth five pounds a year, was a help as well as an honour ; and in 1732, he was sent by the Swedish Academy of Sciences to study the natural history of Lapland. He first paid a long visit to the old parsonage, where as a boy he had studied the ants—of which Sweden has five kinds—and the butterflies ; and made his museum of live insects, finding out what each fed upon ; and studied botany in his father's garden, where almost every tree and flower that would bear the climate had been planted.

He also saw his old school at Wexio, where—as Newton was at Cambridge—he had been given up as a hopeless dunce till Dr. Rothman put him to Pliny and the Georgics, and soon found his "inaptitude for Latin" vanish when the subject matter became congenial. Roth-

man did even better ; he gave young Linnæus a course of Boerhaave's physiology, and in his library, the boy got hold of Tournefort's book, which taught him the beauty of system and the value of arrangement. The testimonial they gave him, when from Wexio he went to Lund University, is curious : "Youths at school, like shrubs in a garden, will sometimes elude all the gardener's care, but, if transplanted, may become fruitful trees." This was not very encouraging, still it must have been pleasant to see the old place where his masters said that "though he seldom joined in the sports, he contrived wonderfully well to be idle without them."

Lapland was then almost an unknown country ; and travelling in that never-ending day was trying even to his hardy frame. He travelled four thousand miles in five months, over thinly-peopled wastes, where those whom he met, when they could speak Swedish, would say : "O thou poor man, what hard fate could have brought thee hither to a place unvisited by anyone before !" Food often failed ; once he was in such straits that some Lapps, sore pressed themselves, gave him a cheese, "lest he should die in their country." Bedding was plentiful, the great hair-moss makes not only mattress, but coverlet.

At Piteå, the parson was Solander, whose son by-and-by came to England and sailed with Captain Cook. In the Lapland Alps, under the peak of Sulitelma, he found all the Arctic plants which linger on English mountains—the ladies' mantle, the Sibbaldia, the mealy primrose, etc.

From Vallivari, he saw all Norway stretched out below like a garden, and descending, met the Pastor of Torfjorden, "to whom I must write hereafter ; for, by his account, he never expected to see an honest Swede."

The heavy air of the lowlands, however, told upon him. In the Lapland mountains he could walk four times his usual distance, and his two Lapp guides—one over seventy—were so agile that they would frisk about while he rested ; one of the reasons he gives for this agility is that "they wear wheels to their boots."

With dwarf birch and creeping willow for the only trees ; with reindeer milk so luscious that, when his bread supply gave out, he could not drink it ; with villagers so wild that when they saw strangers coming they ran away ; with his eyes baffled by the midnight sun's slanting shadows, which, "forming dense blue bands around

a crimson world," made everything look so strange that he even mistook well-known plants—he must have had a strange journey. Once he fell into a crevasse, and was kept a prisoner till his guide got a rope and pulled him out. Once, when he got back to the land of trees, he was almost caught by a forest fire. At Tornea, where he found the reindeer dying by scores, he was able to prove that it was through eating water-hemlock, which the natives did not seem to be aware is deadly poison.

When he got back to Upsala, the academicians were so pleased that they paid him one hundred and twelve silver dollars for his expenses. It is curious that they should not have preserved his Lapland Diary, which he called "*Lachesis Lapponica*." It was bought from his widow, with the rest of his collections, by our botanist, Sir J. E. Smith.

But a man cannot live on fame; and, while he was travelling his readership had been filled up and his pupils had gone to others. He began to suspect that the Lapland tour had been a device of his rival Rosen to get him out of the way. So he began to lecture on assaying, which art he had learnt during his tour. Rosen at once threatened to stop him; no one without a degree (which had to be taken abroad, and therefore needed money) being allowed to lecture. He was summoned before the Senate, and offered to lecture privately; but this, too, was against the statutes. So he got in a towering Berserk rage, waited for Rosen outside, and would have run him through the body had not the bystanders disarmed him.

By Dean Celsius's good offices, expulsion (the statutable penalty for such conduct) was commuted for a reprimand. This outburst carried away with it his pent-up anger. He was horror-stricken at the thought that he might have killed Rosen; and his diary, containing a chapter "*Nemesis Divina*," contains texts from Scripture, from Seneca, and from his own penitent heart.

Rosen, however, refused to make friends; and it was well for both that shortly after a letter came from Baron Reuterholm, Governor of Dalecarlia, inviting him to take his sons round the mines, and sending him the money for the journey.

Besides the Baron's sons, Linnæus chose seven young naturalists out of a host of volunteers, so that the journey was in many ways a contrast to the lonely rambles

through Lapland. The seven divided among them the animal and mineral kingdoms; and, moreover, one of them groomed the horses, another looked after the commissariat, etc.; the daily journal being made up by contributions from each. Everywhere the air was sweet with the perfume of the wild-thyme-leaved bell-flower, thenceforward christened *Linnæa borealis*. Everywhere they found something to note in the plants, the minerals, or the habits of people; measuring the time not by the waxing or waning light, but by the songs of birds, for Linnæus had not yet constructed the Floral Clock, which moreover, requires the neighbourhood of a garden stocked with plants, some of them exotic.

One of the seven was poetically inclined, and began about forest nymphs.

"Pooh! nymphs. We want no nymphs," cried the unromantic Linnæus; "Mother Nature's beauty and beneficence are enough for us. Let us keep fast hold of her apron-strings."

One night there was a thunderstorm, and in the midst of it, the whole base of a large mountain seemed to take fire, with crackling reports, and hissing of red-hot stones falling into the pools. Later on, Linnæus went out alone; and found that it was petroleum, which, during a long drought, had welled up among the peat, and had been set on fire by the lightning. It is interesting to compare both this and the Lapland tour with Du Chaillu's account of the same country; for the discoverer of the gorilla has also been over the same ground as Linnæus.

Both note the abundance of insect life. Linnæus collected one thousand species of insects; one hundred and sixty-five of them flies; they are neatly pasted on paper in our Linnæan Society's Museum—for they were bought, like the rest, by Sir J. Smith. Both ask: "Why did Nature make midges?" to which the wag of Linnæus's party replied: "For our collections, of course." It was strange in some of the Norwegian cottages, "perched among crags where the Parthenon would look like a packing case," to find old porcelain cups and plates—heirlooms from days when plunder from all parts was swept into the homes of the Vikings.

Our Swedes found the Norwegians dirty and grasping. An Oxford man, who knew them well, says that the Sætersdale folks are perhaps the dirtiest in the world; they wash on Christmas Eve, sleeping in their clothes all the rest of the year. "Fair

and false," is how the Norseman describes his Swedish neighbours.

At Falun, Linnæus gave the lectures on assaying which had led to his being boycotted at Upsala; there, too, he heard of his mother's death, and, while sorrowing for her, found comfort in the charms of Sara, daughter of Dr. John Moræus, the town physician. This was not exactly following the advice of a clerical friend, afterwards Bishop of Abo:

"You must travel for your degree," said this wise counsellor. "Harderwijk in Holland is the cheapest place; but even there a degree costs money. Marry a rich wife, and use her wealth to get your doctor's diploma."

Moræus was well-to-do for that half-starved country; but he would not hear of his daughter, "the flower of Falun," who had even refused a Baron, marrying a man with no prospects.

"Wait three years," he said, "and then see if you're both of the same mind."

Linnæus had saved thirty-six gold ducats, worth nine shillings if single, eighteen shillings if double ducats; Swedish eighteenth-century coinage is very puzzling. He had, too, his Wrede exhibition of five pounds a year.

Miss Moræus had been brought up in a hard, sordid school. Nobody in Falun thought of anything but speculating in copper—go and stay at Redruth, and you will see how the mining fever takes hold of people. Her father was as keen as any of them; and later in life—when she made her husband's home wretched by her stingy ways—she showed that money-grubbing was in her blood. But, for a time, she was dazzled by the apparition of a very handsome youth, who cared nothing for the two Falun deities—cash and comfort. As he was going away, she forced him to take her savings, a hundred dollars—probably in copper—and went on saving all the more, because now she had an object.

On his way to Holland—1735—Linnæus failed to discover the only lately opened coal-fields of Qvidinge, near the Kattegat; but at Hamburg he found that the famous "seven-headed hydra," brought from a church in Prague, was, like the mermaids of our childhood, a made-up monster—seven weasels' heads stitched on to a serpent's body. Andersson, a Hamburg merchant, to whom the thing had been pledged for ten thousand marks, was furious, and insisted that Linnæus should prove

his words, or suffer the penalty for libel; but his friends, Dr. Jänisch and others, though he showed them he was right, persuaded him to slip away, and leave the hydra master of the field! "A poor student has no chance in court against a rich merchant."

At Harderwijk, one of "the dead cities of the Zuyder Zee," he defended his thesis—on the cause of intermittent fever—paid his fee, and, like so many of his countrymen, put on his doctor's hat of green felt with red cockade—still to be seen in his house at Hamaark, near Upsala. The name means "Shepherd's Shelter," for when Lake Flevo was broadening out into the Zuyder Zee, the flocks and their guardians were driven to higher ground. The University, long extinct, dates from 1372. The neighbourhood is as dismal as a land can be; "no wonder," says Mrs. Caddy, "the Frisians came to England." He was at last a Doctor of Medicine, but he had only the small change of his last copper dollar in his pocket, as he tramped into Amsterdam.

At Haarlem, Gronovius took kindly to him, asked leave to print, at his own cost, his "System of Nature," and introduced him to Boerhaave of Leyden—so famous that a letter had reached him from the Emperor of China, with no address save "To Boerhaave, the famous physician in Europe." Learning was power in Holland at that time, and Linnæus had a way of making friends with the right men. The phlegmatic Dutchmen were delighted with his lively talk and with the freshness of his views. Boerhaave sent him to Burmann, whom he charmed by pronouncing the cinnamon to be a kind of laurus, and who introduced him to Burgomaster Clifford, a Director of the Dutch East India Company, whose gardens at Hartecamp cost him twelve thousand florins a year. With him Linnæus lived, as physician and botanist, at a salary of one thousand florins a year, making jokes (in Latin—that was the worst, or Sara would have thought the best, of it, for the gardens were the resort of all the beauty and fashion of Amsterdam and the Hague) and living "like a lapdog on a velvet cushion." He was able to help Arctedius, who had spent all his money in England trying to study, and whom he met, almost a beggar, in the streets of Leyden. He drove him, in Clifford's coach and four, to a Dutchman who was bringing out a book on fishes. Arctedius got work at once; and would have

got fame, had he not fallen into a canal one dark night as he was walking home from his employer's. Linnæus persuaded Clifford to pay the poor fellow's debts, and himself finished, with a suitable preface, the book on fishes.

Clifford's kindness was inexhaustible. He noticed that his young friend's mountain-bred soul was pining in the relaxing Dutch air. "Go over to England, and tell me what their North American gardens at Oxford and Chelsea are like," said he. Boerhaave gave him a letter to Sir Hans Sloane, who was rather cool, not wholly understanding his Latin pronunciation. On Putney Heath he saw the gorse. At Oxford Shaw and Martyn made much of him, and pointed out that Vaillant's sexual classification of plants had been anticipated by Millington, in 1670.

When he got back to Holland he was sorely tempted. They offered him the Botany Professorship at Utrecht, and Clifford urged him to stay and learn Dutch, and marry a rich wife. But he refused; lingered half a year at Leyden, to arrange their garden for them; closed Boerhaave's eyes (was admitted when the doctors forbade even the relatives); and then had an attack of fever, thanks to news that, the three years being over, his false friend, afterwards Bishop of Abo, was persuading Sara to forget him.

Recovering, he showed either his trust in his betrothed or his preference for science by going home by way of Paris. Here he was petted immensely, and made a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences; so that, no wonder, when in Sweden he met the usual fate of prophets in their own country, he got vexed, and revenged himself by naming ugly plants after his enemies.

All the Swedish Natural History Professorships were filled by his rivals; so he went to Stockholm and practised as a physician. One of his patients, a Privy Councillor's wife, had a chronic cough. He gave her a lozenge. Next time she was playing cards with the Queen, Her Majesty noticed something in her mouth.

"What's that?"

"A cough remedy; and I'm always better after using it."

Queen Ulrica had a cough, too; Linnæus prescribed, relieved her, became Court Physician, and having at last got into the saddle, went ahead; was made Physician to the Navy by Count Tessin; wrote about diet and ventilation, and other neglected

subjects; helped to found the Swedish Academy of Sciences; married in 1739, and became (his biographers say) miserable ever after.

Yet, however things might be at home, he had compensation enough outside. For, though his rival, Rosen, got the Upsala Botany Professorship when Rudbeck died, Linnæus rose higher and higher in Court favour; and when, in 1742 he was given the Chair of Anatomy in his old University, Rosen and he exchanged, and the dream of his life was fulfilled. Thenceforth, he became "head-gardener to Europe," corresponding with learned men of all countries, getting plants from all climes, worrying himself to try to make his tea-plants blossom, keeping down the softening of the brain which ultimately conquered him, by country tours and diet of wild strawberries. "He found Natural History—especially Botany—a chaos; he left it a science."

He had his weaknesses; vanity was the foible of the eighteenth century, and his "Diary" is full of self-praise. But it was well deserved. "Come to Spain and be King's Botanist," wrote the Duke of Grimaldi. No; he was proud of being the foremost man in Sweden. The Dutch were so mortified at his deserting them that when he wanted to send a pupil to the Cape to look for plants, they refused leave.

However, he could afford to smile at their spite. He was a von Linné, "Knight of the Polar Star," as much about the Court as if he had been one of the Royal family, and, to his wife's delight, making money by pupils and by the books—such as "Pan and Pandora"—which he was constantly writing. The fly in his pot of ointment was his wife's meanness and her cruelty to their son, to whom she grudged even his clothes. Happily, the poor lad—who at one time seriously meditated suicide, at another would have gone as a common soldier, had not the King prevented him—outlived these troubles, and, till his early death, inherited his father's renown.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KETH.

Author of "The Chillocks," etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHEN they went upstairs it was found that Tilly had prepared a little gift for everybody, as a remembrance of the day.

She had spent some thought on the choice, and had tried to discriminate between the taste of the City man, which she met with a gorgeous cigar-case, and her cousin's soberer fancy. It was significant that the most inconsiderable of these little presents, which she gave with a charming simplicity, was bestowed on Fred. John extracted no comfort from this circumstance; what, indeed, was the use of giving him any thing at all, since he was so soon to have everything?

John, it will be seen, had resigned himself to the inevitable; but he did it with a mere exterior decency, and with an inward chafing and raging that was altogether foreign to his kindly nature.

Mr. Burton stood on the hearthrug, in the attitude loved of Britons, and watched Tilly as she moved about, making a jest of her kindness, and with smiles and laughter forbidding so much as a hint of patronage. If only the rough person, whose money had bought these trifles, would have held his peace; but to one, at least, of the guests there was insult unspeakable in the braggart air with which he looked on, as if he would say:

"I could have spent ten times the amount on each of you and never missed it."

To John, in his new mood of hurt and sore bewilderment, his uncle seemed at last to stand out in his true light. When he had been jolly and kindly, his vulgarity had been tolerable, even interesting, but he shrank away with sensitive dislike from this assertive arrogance; he was almost glad that his uncle had ceased to have any show of kindness for him; it made his revolt at least permissible.

"Now, then, my lass, why don't you show them your own brows?" he cried in his loud, unmodulated tones, when Tilly had made the last of her little presentations.

She flushed up hotly and hesitated for an instant, during which John felt an extreme desire to knock his uncle down. There was an involuntary pause of expectation when she left the room; Uncle Bob's air seemed to hint at an astonishment in store for them, and, indeed, they were all surprised into admiration when she returned to them decked with brilliants. She wore them round her neck, in her ears, on her shapely arms.

"I guess you won't see diamonds that cost a bigger price on any of your fine lady friends," Uncle Bob said to Fred,

who, for once, failed to have a ready answer. He was willing enough to take his good fortune, but he would have preferred to have been dazzled in private. He had arrived at pretty much the same opinion as John, though he reached it by a different road. His good taste was affronted by this display.

Tilly bore their scrutiny and their praise of the jewels, and obliquely of herself as their wearer, with a silence that had some haughtiness in it. Her eyes were downcast; but when she lifted them the pride and coldness in them melted into sudden love as they rested on the homely figure by the fire.

"Was there ever so generous an uncle as mine?" she said, and she looked round daring them to take any other view. Her defiance seemed specially levelled at John Temple, and it somehow helped him to come forward and admire with the others.

"The ring is too big for me," she said. She opened the case and took out the half-hoop, slipping it on her finger and letting it slide from it again. "I can't wear it—and those others, I don't think I shall ever be ready for them. I wish you would lock them away in your Bank, John."

"You could have the ring taken in and then you might wear it," he said, feeling a sudden inflow of restored amiability. "I could have it done for you. I know a very careful jeweller who may be trusted."

"Then take it, please. And here is one for the size."

"I won't risk carrying anything so precious to Fulham," he said; "if you'll have it tied up I'll call for it on Friday morning. The shop will be shut to-morrow."

He slipped the other ring which was of no value into his waistcoat pocket. He was grateful to her for giving him even a trifle like this to do for her, more grateful than for the books he carried home with him for which his uncle's shillings had paid.

When they had all taken leave, she stood by the table, slowly taking off the jewels and putting them back precisely in their cases. She broke her silence by telling her uncle what John proposed to do for her about the ring.

"You might have let the other one do it," he said with discontent.

"You would have the other one do everything," she smiled.

"Yes," he said with emphasis, "and get everything."

"Don't you think he would be content with less than that?" she asked with rather a forced gaiety.

"I wouldn't—for him," he began strongly, but he faltered immediately, and said with a gentleness that was almost humble: "but it's for you to say, little lass, how much or how little he's to have."

She played a while with the bracelet, slipping it off and on; then she shut the case with a snap and went up to him.

"Do you mean this—really?" she said wistfully, with no pretence at misunderstanding him.

"I mean it—if you mean it."

"Oh, how can I tell what I mean!" she said a trifle impatiently. "Tell me what you had thought about it."

"Well," he began more briskly, as if this permission were a relief, "this is how it is. You've got to marry somebody."

A glimmer of a smile crossed her face.

"A great many excellent people never do," she murmured.

He dismissed this view with a wave of his big hand as if it were too frivolous to be noticed.

"And seeing you've got to marry somebody, it may just as well as not be a man we know something about. He's a Temple, but there's nothing against him;" this was an ungenerous thrust at John, but she let it pass, being, indeed, very much absorbed in what he had to say.

"He's well enough to look at," he went on, calculating Fred's advantages. "Call him a good-looking chap, wouldn't you?"

"I can't conscientiously object to his looks," she said.

"Nor to his manners?" he demanded.

"His manners fit him as beautifully as if he had been measured for them by the very best tailor."

He did not quite know what to make of this, but he felt too anxious to settle the main question to branch off into side issues, so he relinquished this point.

"And he's got no money—not a bawbee beyond his miserable wage at the office, and an odd hundred or two, may be, that the doctor has scraped together, and may leave him when he dies."

"Most people would count that a serious drawback in a young gentleman in search of a wife," she said demurely.

"Well, I don't, that's all," he asserted bluntly. "And he's no better born than you or me, and that's another point. He can't put on any airs and turn round and say he's done you a favour by marrying

you, as some of these young sparks would do fast enough. He'll owe every penny he's got to you; and with my pile that's all coming to you, my lass, you'll be the equal of anybody, I don't care who it is."

"Everybody's equal and my husband's superior. Do you know, Uncle Bob, you have surprisingly advanced views of matrimony? You would almost satisfy the American girl whose ambition it is to see on her tombstone, 'John Smith—relict of Sarah Smith.' In my case it will be, 'Frederic Temple—relict of'—but I won't be there to see it," she cried with a laugh; "my reign will be over by then."

"Can't see what you're driving at," he said a little mystified and rather inclined to be sulky. "There's no American girl that I know of in the question."

"No, there's only me," she passed an arm across his shoulder and leaned her cheek on it. "Oh, you must let me laugh," she said, though she was nearer crying. "It's too serious for me to take it any other way."

"But you'll think of it!" he urged, ignoring the paradox.

"Oh, I'll think of it," she said with a half sigh. "You've secured that." Then she rallied. "But I needn't decide this minute! You don't want to marry me to-night! And I suppose he'll have a word to say; it's the usual thing, I believe. How do you know he wants me?" she demanded, lifting her head to look at him.

He laughed out, as if he found this an excellent pleasantry.

"I've got a pair of eyes in my head," he said.

"Well, I've got a pair of ears," she retorted. "I can listen if he has got anything to say."

She changed the subject swiftly, and would suffer no further discussion of it then. It had, indeed, been too rudely handled already, but when she bade him good-night, she held to him clingingly while she said:

"You have been everything, everything to me; it ought to be very easy for me to do what you wish."

"Aye," he said, all his better impulses coming forward in his love for her, and out-trooping his baser, "but, my pretty, if it isn't easy; if it's 'sweir' at all, we'll put an end to the business before it's begun. I want you to do just what you want to do."

"Oh, yes, I know," she said, and she went away a little comforted; but she

knew that his wishes must control her at last. The difficulty now was to decide whether she desired to be so controlled.

She gave most of the night to the problem, which she could not work out to any clear conclusion.

Most of the next day was ceded to it also, though no one would have supposed it, from the air of gay unconcern with which she went about, and with which she overwhelmed Mr. Frederic Temple when he came, by appointment, to ride with her.

Concealment of her feelings is a woman's most precious weapon, and one she quickly learns to wield.

Hypocrites all of them, cruellest sometimes in fear lest they should be too kind, and vainly kind when they are most cruel. Not that either of these was Tilly's case; she wanted to know her mind, and she therefore did everything in her power to prevent Fred from helping her, by telling her his. Undoubtedly, however, he had taken a stronger place in her interest since she knew that he was her lover. A lover is always an interesting object to a girl, even if she means to crush him with an unalterable "No." It makes her think remorsefully of him, and rather well of herself; it also makes her observant of his behaviour. Tilly was so watchful, indeed, that she scarce allowed the young man to open his lips without snapping him up; and she hedged herself from meaning looks, or allusions, by keeping the young girl from upstairs at her side during the moments of his stay.

When they set out for their ride, she had to be alone with him, except for the hired groom, who did not count, and was merely a correct appendage; but she suffered no lapse from business, and when she was not praising the paces of the chestnut mare, she was steady in her demand to be taught. She really rode very well and fearlessly, and the hints he could have given from his own not too wide experience might soon have been exhausted, had she not feigned an ignorance that needed much enlightenment.

Fred, perhaps, interpreted this new behaviour favourably to himself; having in any case screwed his courage to the needful point, he did not mean to be unanswered.

When they got back to Yarrow House, and had yielded their horses to the groom, he did not take the hand she held out to him in farewell.

"I am coming upstairs, with your per-

mission," he said. "I have something to say to you."

"Is it something that won't keep?" she asked, with a last effort at escape.

"It won't keep," he answered seriously, and she submitted to the inevitable.

Any faint hopes of support she might have cherished vanished before the blank emptiness of her private room. Uncle Bob had basely sneaked off, and the young teacher had gone back to her toil.

Tilly tossed off her hat and sat down, pushing back her sunny hair with both hands from her brow. The chair she had chosen was a straight-backed one, and as she sat upright in it, her slim grace severely outlined by the habit she wore, it seemed to him she took on a Diana-like austerity of aspect that might have chilled a less ambitious hope. It is rather difficult to make love to a young lady who won't give you the smallest help or encouragement by so much as a blush or a tremor, but Fred managed pretty well; possibly he may even have done the same sort of thing before. She was visibly shaken when he produced the sprig of heather, extremely withered and shrivelled, but still recognisable to the eye of faith.

"It isn't very flourishing," he said, "but that's because I've carried it about ever since I picked it up; but don't tell me the virtue has gone out of it."

"So it was you who picked it up!" she said wonderingly. "I lost it; it was to have brought us good luck."

"Well, mayn't it bring us good luck?" he pleaded. "You and me—to me, at least, the greatest happiness and pride—"

"You and me," she interrupted, smiling faintly, "how odd it sounds."

"It sounds splendid—to me," he said more boldly.

He left the mantelpiece, where he had been leaning, and came over to her, where she still sat erect on her high chair.

"Won't you give me an answer?" he asked quite humbly.

"I don't know what answer to give you," she said; but she refused him the hand he would have taken, and folded it over the other in her lap. She looked up at him with a frank trouble in her eyes, that was in itself an answer, if she had but known it; but she only said weakly: "If I knew what to say, I would say it."

"You might say 'Yes,' to begin with, and think about it afterwards."

She laughed at the suggestion, but she shook her head.

"Well, then," he went on, "if you are not sure—and I don't know why you should care for me—won't you let it be enough that I love you? If you will let me try to be worthy of you——"

"No," she said, "that would be a very unequal bargain. I don't think it ever answers to take anything on trial. I might find it difficult to return you," she said, with an irrepressible smile, "if, upon consideration, I didn't like you."

"I would behave so well that I'd make you like me," he said, smiling too. "Your uncle is on my side," he went on, "won't you let his wishes plead with you?"

This was a blunder, and he knew it from the moment he had committed it. It had a hint of coercion, or so she seemed to think, for she stiffened under it.

"It was his kindness that gave me hope," he went on, trying to cover his lost ground, "but if he had been the sternest uncle in fiction, it would have been all the same as far as my love was concerned. That has been yours from the first moment I saw you."

This may or may not have been true; but at least he believed it at the moment, and it gave the needed ring of honesty to his words.

Tilly sighed helplessly, and then she laughed, unable to resist the humorous aspect of her own perplexity.

"It is rather inconvenient never to have been in love before," she said, "because then I'd have known the exact temperature of my feelings towards you. Why shouldn't we go on as we are doing till—till matters become clearer?"

"Then you will take me on trial, after all?"

"I suppose it would amount to that." She looked grave and then she brightened again. "We'll keep company," she said. "That is what young people do in Lilliesmuir, and I've always thought it extremely sensible of them. The young man comes sometimes of an evening, say once a week, and occasionally on Sundays. They walk home from church together, when they discuss the sermon, and the weather, and the crops, and other interesting things, and in the course of a few years, when they have found out all about each other's tastes, and habits, and opinions, they make up their minds whether they like each other well enough to become engaged."

"That isn't how they keep company here," cried the lover. "Here they walk together on summer nights in shady lanes

where the nightingale still makes music for them, and he has his arm round her waist, and what he says to her he says in a whisper, in case the birds should hear and put it in their song; and it isn't politics, you may be sure, nor sermons, for when they go to church together they hold one hymn-book between them, and all the sermon he knows is written for him in her eyes. If you will keep company with me in this way," he said audaciously, "I will tell you what it is they talk about."

"But I am Scotch, you forget, and so you sometimes pretend you are. We will do it in the national way, if you please, and in no other."

And though he pleaded further, this is what it came to in the end. He was to wait; he was to have some of a lover's privileges, but not all of them. "It will be easier to stop—if we must stop," she said, when he would have urged a more bountiful measure of grace.

She wore her Diana-like air again as she made her bargain, shaking a slim finger at him. No, he wasn't to take her hand, certainly not. As for kissing her, that he would never have dared to suggest. When he said something about writing, she laughed in his face.

"You may come to see me—once a week," she said, "and long before we need think of settling anything, I shall know all your views without giving you the trouble of writing them down."

Could the maiden divinity herself have been more austere?

Uncle Bob was perhaps even more disappointed than Fred, since Tilly's decision put off the confounding of the aristocracy and the exhibition of his own grandeur to a remote and indefinite future; but he yielded to her when she represented that she had not felt any inspiration to give her lover more—as yet. That "as yet," comforted him—perhaps it comforted her too, for what she could hardly help feeling was her unfaithfulness to his wishes. He had sense enough to let her alone, and to feel that he best prospered his cause by silence, and they were chatting about some quite indifferent matter the next evening, when a message was brought up that John Temple would like to see Tilly.

She was about to run down to the empty dining-room, but her uncle checked her.

"I suppose he can give his message up here," he said suspiciously. "If it's a secret, you've got no business to listen to him."

"It isn't that," she said, blushing faintly, and accordingly the maid had orders to invite him upstairs.

He came in quietly enough: Fred always gave an air of gay bustle to his comings and goings; but John was no lover of fuss. He nodded to his uncle and shook hands with Tilly. It was she to whom he spoke.

"I looked in," he said, "to tell you of a little mistake you made this morning. When I took your little parcel to the jeweller and explained what was wanted, he opened it, and this is what he found," he smiled in anticipation of her amusement, as he handed her a ring-case he took from his pocket.

She opened it, and looked at it in blank astonishment. It was empty.

"No ring?" she said.

"No ring," he repeated. "I would have come back in the morning if I had had time, but I felt sure you would discover the mistake during the day."

"No," she began wonderingly, "I——"

"You put the ring in the night before last. I saw you with my own eyes," said Uncle Bob, joining for the first time in the conversation.

Something in his tone made her look up.

"I thought I did," she said quickly, "but one could easily be mistaken about a thing like that. Very likely I left it by mistake with the other things."

"Well, if you did, it'll be there still," he said determinedly. "Go and see."

The jewels were locked up for greater safety in a deed-box in which he kept some papers of value; it had been brought for some purpose of his own into the sitting-room, and she moved towards it unwillingly.

"I haven't the key."

"The key is here. Wait; I'll bring the box to the light." He lifted it with a strong hand to the table where a light burned clear; he drew the key from his waistcoat pocket and unlocked the box, but he left her to open it.

The cases were all safe within. She took them out one by one and opened them slowly. The necklace flashed in her fingers; the bracelets, the spray for her hair; but there was no ring. She shook the papers with a trembling hand, tossing them out of the box quite fruitlessly.

"Where is it? What can have become

of it?" she said at last, in a distressed voice.

"You'd better ask your cousin," said Uncle Bob brutally.

John had stood perfectly still during the search, making no offer to further it. His uncle's manner and the bitter disdain of his looks had struck a shameful doubt to his heart, which his generosity moved him not to entertain; but these words left him no choice.

He spoke at last, but though his face was white and his eyes full of fire, his voice was calm with scorn.

"Do you take me for a thief?" he said.

Tilly took a quick step forward, and stood between them.

"Oh, no, no," she said. "John, how could you imagine such a thing! Uncle," she turned to him, "say it is a mistake."

But he repulsed her for the first time in his life roughly.

"It will be time enough to say it was a mistake when he brings back the ring. You gave it him, and he's got to find it—if it's lost. Till he does find it, and bring it back here, I'm free to think what I choose. It's not the first time I've had reason to doubt one of his name."

She turned mutely from her uncle, and went up to her cousin. The colour was blanced out of her face, and even her lips were white, but her eyes pleaded for pity, for mercy. She tried to speak, but the words would not come. She was humiliated, overwhelmed, abased; but her loyalty to her uncle forbade her so much as an excuse for him.

In the whirl of his wildly-stirred emotions, John had an instinctive perception of this, and he knew without her telling that she believed in him.

"Bear with him, do not defend yourself, have pity on us both," her look said, and he yielded before it. His face worked convulsively, but the scorn and passion died out of it, and he stooped and kissed the hand that lay on his arm in mute pledge. It was a dearer-bought victory than she knew; but after it, without a word or a glance towards his uncle, he turned and went. Yet never before in all his blameless life had he held his head so proudly.

Tilly sank down on the floor, and hid her face in her hands.

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BOOK IX.

CHAPTER I. "DREEING HIS WEIRD."

THE seasons had come and gone. Spring and summer, autumn and winter, had followed each other through the birth and death of a year, and throughout that year Adrian Lyle had worked on steadily and uncomplainingly, winning golden opinions on all sides—the stay and prop of the old Rector, whose health was failing fast—respected and beloved throughout the whole parish for his good deeds and his blameless life. Never did man live more nobly up to the Faith he professed and the lessons he taught. There was no duty neglected, no trouble shirked; but the burden was not lightened, and that one face had never faded from before his aching eyes.

Silence black as night, and bitter as death, reigned between them. He knew nothing of her save that Neale Kenyon's search had been vain, and that, in despair, he had returned to Madras and rejoined his regiment, leaving the search in other hands. The Abbey was shut up, and Alexis Kenyon had gone abroad. Once or twice she had written to him, but his replies had been so brief and so cold that she felt that no encouragement had been offered to continue the correspondence.

There had been some talk of her return for Christmas; but the bells had rung their message over the white earth, and she had not come.

Indeed, Alexis Kenyon having accomplished her task, and baffled her weak and

repentant cousin's generous impulse, felt a certain horror and shame of herself. Life at the Abbey would have been unendurable, and despite Neale's eager and persistent entreaties, she left it, and went away with Lady Breresford. She felt she could not endure to meet Adrian Lyle, knowing what she knew; and absence—if it taught her nothing else—taught her how blindly she had deceived herself with respect to his regard for her.

It was a blow to her vanity, and it hardened and embittered her more and more; but she had never flinched from truth, and she knew that she never had been, and never could be, anything to the one only man who had ever awakened a throb of tenderness in her own heart. When she acknowledged this, she felt a thrill of triumph at the remembrance of her stratagem. At least her rival was safe, and should never have the happiness denied to herself; never even guess that the man whose unselfish friendship and devotion had been so generously offered, had loved and loved her still with all the strength of his noble heart.

And yet, when Alexis thought of what she had done, she always felt that cruel thrill of triumph run through her veins. How skilfully she had baffled them, and how easy it had been! The girl had been so helpless and so pliant that she felt nothing for her but contempt. She had for once failed to read between the lines, and recognise the simple heroism underlying that meek consent. "When the year is up," she would murmur to herself, in insolent security, "I will tell Neale what I have done. I mean to marry him—some day—in spite of all. It would be a pity to lose the Abbey; and when he knows

his Quixotic folly is impossible, he will return to his allegiance."

It had not been without a struggle that Adrian Lyle had remained at Medehurst. Often and often had he longed to leave a place grown hateful with so many bitter memories; but one thought restrained him. If Gretchen needed him—if at any time she chose to break that seal of silence, she knew where he could be found. He felt, too, that, go where he might, his sorrow would be with him—that though the ocean rolled between their parted lives, his thoughts would bridge the space, and his faithful heart be with her in its hours of mourning, and its nights of sleepless pain. So he waited with what patience he could. At Christmas time he said: "Surely she will send some word or sign," but none came. Then the New Year dawned, and he told himself: "Surely now she will remember." But the days passed, and the month was near its end, and he asked himself, "had she indeed gone out of his life for ever?"

One night he came home a little later than usual, and more than a little tired. He had walked a long distance to see a farmer's wife whose child was dying. He had done what he could to comfort the sorrow-stricken mother; but he told himself reproachfully that the ring of truth was not in his words; the boldness of belief not in his voice. The coldness and spiritlessness of his own feelings were endangering his powers of expression, and he grew frightened as he thought of the effect that this change might have upon others.

His room looked bright and cheerful. The fire blazed merrily, the kettle sang on the hob. His old landlady bustled in to make his tea and see that he removed his wet boots, for he was sadly self-forgetful in these days. When that was done and she saw him drinking his tea, she suddenly clapped her hand on her pocket, with an exclamation of horror: "Bless me, if I hadn't nearly forgotten! Here, sir, this came for you an hour or more ago—a furrin telegram, I think. Hope it's no bad news."

He seized it from her hand and tore it open without a word. He saw in a moment that it was from Kenyon, and wondered at its length, till he recognised that half the sender's fortune would not have atoned for delay.

It said: "Go to Dornbach—she is to take the veil on the 2nd of February. For Heaven's sake prevent it."

That was all. But it was enough to turn Adrian Lyle from a statue into an image of frenzied, breathing, passionate life.

He must go; he must save her at any cost, at any sacrifice! Save her——! Then he stopped, the paper clenched convulsively in his grasp. Save her for another man? Save her, to give love, and joy, and gladness to the selfish and weak-hearted being who had wrecked her youth as wantonly and heedlessly as a child robs a bird of its nest or a butterfly of its bloom? Why should he save her; what claim, what right had Neale Kenyon to demand it? He had suffered cruelly, sorely at his hands; why should he suffer more?

She had chosen her fate. No one had driven her to it. She had resigned the world, and accepted peace and oblivion in its place. Why should he interfere, or, even if he did, how could he persuade her to listen to his plea or alter her determination?

But the evil moment passed. He sank back on his chair and buried his face upon his arms, and it seemed that, for a brief space, even thought grew still, and a calm, that was like the calm of death, sealed every sense and silenced every doubt. Then he rose, cold, and grave, and stern, with the last glow of youth gone out of his face and the last pulse of hope dead in his heart.

CHAPTER II.

"OF ALL SAD THINGS OF TONGUE OR OF PEN."

"It is bitter weather," grumbled old Lisschen, as she piled wood in the stove and drew the curtains over the shuttered windows; "bitter weather, and the gnädige Frau not in; she will kill herself soon. It is always the same. Fretting for the child because she has done the very thing she was always wanted to do. What a strange thing it has been! I thought to help her to happiness; but it seems I did not. Wheu-u-u, how the wind blows to-night! The snow must have drifted a foot high in the street. Ah! surely that was a knock!"

She hurried out and into the little hall, and opened the door. No one was there. The snow was piled in heaps about the door. The wind blew in loud, fierce gusts from the hills above.

As the old woman stood there a moment, shading her eyes from the heavy falling

snow, she saw a solitary pedestrian struggling along up the narrow little street, fighting his way against the elements with a dogged perseverance that called forth her admiration.

"What a night to be out!" she said again with a shiver, and drew back and half-closed the door. Before she could do so, the figure she had been watching was opposite, and the ray of light seemed to attract his notice. In a second he had crossed the intervening space, and was addressing the old woman in fairly good German.

"Will you have the goodness to tell me," he asked, "where the Convent is? I was directed to go up this street and then turn, but whether right or left I could not make out."

"The Convent?" echoed Lisschen in surprise. "Oh, mein Herr, that is not much further;" and she gave him the necessary directions, surveying him with undisguised curiosity all the while. "What can he want there?" she thought, and then made a second attempt to close the door; but this time she as suddenly flung it open, for she saw the tall, shrouded figure of her mistress close beside the stranger. He moved aside, but the opening of the door threw the light upon his face, and there came a faint, startled cry from the lips of the veiled woman.

"Mr. Lyle!" she cried. "You! How did you come here?"

He seized her hands.

"Thank Heaven," he said, "that I have met you! You can tell me the truth. It is not too late, is it? She—she has not taken the veil?"

"Come within," said the trembling woman. "I cannot speak here. Where were you going? Not to the Convent?"

"Yes," he said.

"It would be no use. You would not be admitted at this hour. In fact, I doubt if you can see her at all. To-morrow is the last day of probation."

She had drawn him into her little hall, and the wondering Lisschen closed the door at last upon the storm and darkness of the night. They took off their outer wraps, all white and heavy with snow, and went into the little parlour, and shut the door behind them; but Lisschen's curiosity was so overpowering that she lingered without, and even went so far as to put her ear to the keyhole. What she heard was terrifying enough to make her retreat very rapidly. She got back into her kitchen, shaking more with fear than cold.

"What a scandal!" she ejaculated dropping the cloaks in a heap on the red-tiled floor, "what a scandal for the place! An English priest coming to talk her away! They will never permit it. cannot be done;" and she crossed herself and looked round in horror, for, though somewhat lax in her duties, Lisschen was a stout Catholic at heart, and doings such as the strange visitor had hinted at savoured to her of sacrilege.

For more than two hours did the stranger remain with her mistress. Lisschen took them in coffee, and then examined the visitor more closely.

"He looks as if the hand of death were upon him," she said to herself in a sort of awe, as she looked at the lines on the haggard brow, the deep, sunken eyes that had so sad and hopeless a look. "What can he have to do with Gretchen or the gnädige Frau either?"

But her curiosity was not destined to be satisfied that night. She only felt that the hand of trouble was pressing heavily upon her mistress; she only knew that the long, cold, dreary night was spent by her in sleepless pacing to and fro in her lonely room.

Quite early in the morning the English visitor came again, and then he and Anna von Waldstein went out together, and Lisschen knew they must have gone to the Convent.

She grumbled to herself as she went about her work, wondering what they meant to do, and how it could be worth their while to interfere at this late hour with the determination of Gretchen.

Meanwhile, the two about whom she speculated were standing before the gate of the Convent, waiting for admission.

"I cannot promise, as I told you, that you shall see her," Anna von Waldstein whispered hurriedly. "But, remember, do not betray your profession, or it will be hopeless. I pray Sister Maria may not see you; she has a long memory, and she has the ear of the Superior. For the present, you are only a friend, and you have come to say farewell. You will remember."

"I shall remember," said Adrian Lyle calmly. In his heart he thought how true were her words; it was indeed farewell that he had come to say.

The door was opened; there was a short colloquy with an old and wrinkled nun who was the portress. Then his companion signed to him to follow her, and led him into a small, bare, poorly furnished

room, warmed by the eternal German stove, and lit by a small grated window, which only allowed a glimpse of the sky, all soft and grey now with heavy snow-clouds.

"Wait here," she said, "and I will bring her. As this is her last day of liberty, I hope they will not deny me."

Adrian Lyle said nothing. He felt as if speech were beyond him. A sort of dim wonder was in his mind as to how he had come here. The journey, and all connected with it, looked hazy and indistinct. Mechanically he put his hand to his breast and drew out a crushed and tumbled scrap of paper. It was the telegram Neale Kenyon had sent.

And now he must carry this message; he must fight this battle for the absent man, which he could not fight for himself. A strange vengeance truly was this, that he was about to take on the only enemy he possessed! He could have laughed aloud at the mockery of human purpose, the futility of human will. What task more undesirable, ay, and what tempting more terrible could have been thrust into his hands?

"Heaven, give me strength!" he cried in his heart. "Give me strength to keep silence to the end!"

While the agony of that prayer still held him, the door softly opened. He lifted his head and looked up.

There was a long, long pause—a pause when meeting eyes spoke as words never could have done, and in the shock and silence of that meeting, realised at last the change that had fallen on either life.

He saw her coming towards him, slowly, uncertainly, like a vision strange and far off, with her face so white and sad, and the soft black folds of her novice's dress falling in straight and simple lines around the slender figure. How slender, how fragile it had grown in this short year!

Nearer she came—nearer. Oh, the piteous eyes; the little trembling mouth that vainly strove to frame some greeting; the outstretched hands that were lifted, only to fall helpless at her side!

As she saw the look that leaped into his eyes, a little cry escaped her, but it was stifled on his breast, and his arms were round her, holding her close—close to that agonised heart. She had no thought to resist. Why should she? She only clung to him like a grieved child sobbing wildly out her joy and sorrow, yet crying piteously, "Oh, why had he come now—why—why?"

He was silent. He held her there for the first—last time in all his life, so his heart whispered. He knew it; but he had grown weary with the long battle; and what he had read in her eyes only his heart knew—and hers. He looked down on the bright rich hair, flooding his breast with its light. Involuntarily he bent his head and touched one loose soft tress with reverent lips.

"Gretchen," he whispered. "Oh, my poor child—my poor child!"

His voice seemed to recall her to herself. He felt her shiver and strive to draw herself away. He let his arms fall, and drew back a step. "You need not fear me," he said very gently. "I am only here as your brother or—your father—might have been. Can't you look upon me as such? I am old enough and stern enough, Heaven knows."

She looked up with her eyes all drowned in tears; she saw him lift his head and sweep back that loose, thick wave of hair she so well remembered. It was quite white.

A look of fear—of horror came into that intent and sorrowful gaze. "Oh," she cried, "how changed you are! What has done it? What?"

"You, I think!" he said, and laughed bitterly, though he drew his hand across his eyes, where sprang the sudden smart of tears. "Why should I not tell you now? It can do neither harm nor good that you should know. I—I loved you, Gretchen. It was very unwise, was it not? But that has only hurt myself, and what it has cost, that, too, concerns but me—still——"

"Oh, hush," she cried brokenly. "You don't mean it—you can't mean it! You loved me . . . me!"

"You," he repeated. "What have you to say against yourself?"

For all answer she drew herself away. Words thronged to her lips, but she could not utter them. She felt stifled and afraid.

"Do not speak," he said, as he saw the struggle in her face. "I will not offend you again. . . . For a moment I forgot it was the part of brother I had to play. Let me tell you what brought me here, and then——"

He drew a sharp, quick breath. His face darkened with sudden dread.

"Do not tell me anything," she implored. "It is quite useless—it is too late. Nothing could alter my resolve now. When—when I have said good-bye to you, my life has won its last desire of earth."

"But you must hear," he said, almost fiercely. "Neale Kenyon has prayed to me to save you for—for his sake. Have you forgotten that you loved him—that he loved you? And now his one hope and thought is to win your forgiveness, to atone for the wrong he once did, to make you his wife. Gretchen, why do you turn away? Will nothing move you? Won't you listen?"

"I will not listen," she said, "to your pleading for another man. My forgiveness he has had. He did not need to ask it; but for aught else . . . Mr. Lyle, there is no grave deep enough for forgetfulness of that time! He never loved me—I was mistaken. I—I could not bear to look upon his face again. That time—that awful time would rise before me, like a grim and mouldering corpse. Between us lies, cold and pale, the body of my dead child! I said before and I say again, there is no resurrection for a love killed as mine was killed, and it is better that this last voluntary act should prove it. He will believe me then, and he will find happiness and forgetfulness too, in a world that no longer holds me."

She stood before him, her hands clasped, her head bowed as if with the weight of that bitter past she had recalled. Every word she had spoken was pain and sweetness both in the ears of the man who heard them. He had fulfilled his mission—it was no fault of his if it had failed.

His silence seemed to trouble her. She looked up, and there was a ring of appeal in her voice as she spoke again:

"Mr. Lyle, I had but half-an-hour to give you; a quarter of that time has sped."

He started.

"Oh," he cried passionately, "you cannot mean it! you will not do this! It is not too late. Your mother will take you back even now, and, however lonely and sad life is, there will be liberty—friends—hope—"

"Hope!" she echoed wearily, "for me? What kind of hope? Not happiness—that is over; not safety, while temptation lurks on every side; not peace, while a thousand distractions are at hand, and I might learn to forget even Heaven. Mr. Lyle, you must not think I have acted without long and prayerful consideration. Your teachings have not been lost, and I think you know that though I love your faith best, I am not false to it at heart. My life here will be

hard; it will be barren; it will be hopeless, so far as all things of earth are concerned; but you, least of any man, should condemn it—knowing what I was, and fearing what I might become; for my heart is very rebellious, and I cannot school it to submission—always—"

"You mean——" he said in that breathless pause, when once again her soul looked back to his in one most sad and yearning gaze.

"I mean," she said, her face growing white and still, "that I might find danger. I am very weak, Mr. Lyle."

His heart throbbed so wildly that it seemed to him she must hear it. He tried to speak, but the words died off his lips, and he staggered feebly to a chair and hid his face from sight.

As she saw him break down so utterly, her very pity lent her courage. She came to him, and laid one cold and trembling hand upon his arm.

"Listen," she said, "just this once, and I will tell you all that is in my heart and has been for longer than even I myself guessed. I am not a weak girl now, Mr. Lyle, but a woman who has been through the fire of suffering, and who knows good from evil at least. To-day we stand, you and I, face to face and heart to heart. I read yours, and I feel you read mine. But all the same, you fulfilled your duty as you have fulfilled every duty I have seen you take up. I would not dare to speak to you like this, only—only it is just as if you stood by my grave, and I could rise and tell you something that would not let me rest. Do you understand?"

"Yes," he said brokenly, in that soft pause when the brave young voice faltered and grew faint beneath the strain of gathering tears.

"So it is, that I will hide nothing from you; nothing in this last day of my life as—as you will count life. I can't say—oh, for my own sake I can't say—I wish that life had never crossed your own; but for all the pain and suffering I have cost you, it is but right you should know that your great and noble heart has not loved me without return; that I too have known the pain, and the struggle, and have reiled at Fate, and even at Heaven, for the cruelty that has marred and spoilt the most perfect and beautiful dream that ever woman dreamt. Don't speak; hear me out, while I have strength—and—and keep your face hidden still; the change in it hurts me more than any reproach. I won't

say forget me, not just yet; but I want you to think of me tenderly, regretfully, as of a friend you have lost, and whose life was all a mistake; a friend who loved you very dearly, and would not have given you a moment's pain, could she have helped it; but Fate was too strong for her, and—and——"

She had broken down now, and was sobbing at his feet, and he, all utterly unmanned, could only gaze at her with love unutterable.

"Oh, child," he cried, "you break my heart—you break my heart!"

"And mine," she moaned, "is broken." And suddenly her arms relaxed, and with a shudder she fell forwards, her loosened hair, like a flood of light, sweeping over the bare boards at his feet.

He raised her, white and senseless as a broken lily. He held her to his breast, and with yearning eyes devoured the death-like beauty of her face. Then reverently, as one may kiss the dead, he kissed the marble brow, the closed eyelids, the soft white lips, the loose rich hair.

"Oh, love," he cried brokenly, "at least in death you are mine, as you are Heaven's."

And he laid her gently down, and with blind eyes and staggering feet he groped his way to the door.

Someone was pacing to and fro the dark and narrow passage. Some one who touched his arm, and gazed pityingly at his face.

"Is it over?" she asked.

He looked at her as one looks at a stranger. It was Anna von Waldstein.

"Yes," he said, "it is over. Go to her. She needs only you now."

CHAPTER III.—"AUF WIEDERSEHEN."

ALL the day the snow fell thick and fast, and from time to time the sound of muffled bells came through the air.

Adrian Lyle had no consciousness of aught beside, as he sat in that little dusky parlour at Dornbach, waiting for Anna von Waldstein's return. How he had reached it he could not have said; but he sat there like a statue, and from time to time old Lisschen crept in and looked at him with frightened eyes; not daring to ask a question, but feeling that something dreadful must have happened.

Whether hours, or days, or weeks, had passed since he had left Gretchen, Adrian Lyle could not have said. He only knew

he had had time enough to go over every hour that he had known her from that first night when, in her soft grey dress, she had taken her seat opposite to him at the table d'hôte in Venice, to this last day when he had learnt the truth in her last, broken words.

The truth! Had it any comfort for him? Was he one whit the happier for the knowledge? Could it have brought her any nearer to him in the past than it had brought her now? He felt it could not—not while Neale Kenyon lived. Adrian Lyle had far too strong a sense of duty and of honour to have ever attempted to shake Gretchen's allegiance. At any cost to himself, he would have counselled her to accept Kenyon's atonement, because it seemed to him it was the only right and honourable one for the man who had wronged her to make. But now that he had learnt her secret, and knew that with the fall of her girlish idol had also perished her love, he dimly felt that she had acted wisely in putting this barrier between them. Such a marriage would only have been a mockery—a mere empty form without meaning, and without sanctity.

He shuddered as with icy chill when he sat there in the dusk; he had not moved since he came in in the morning. It seemed to him that he never could move again. Sense and feeling were numbed, but there was mercy in that dead apathy. He felt that he had touched the very extremity of pain to-day, when he knew she loved him as vainly as he loved her, and had glided from his arms to a living grave. "Save her!" How could he save her? He felt it was impossible. Save her! No, he could not save her now. To-night the sun would set upon her grave; to-night the sweet, sad eyes would look their last at all that made life hopeful. For her the tragedy of human existence was over. The curtain would fall on a long, long darkness, and he could only pray in dumb beseechment: "Heaven, send her peace, send her peace!"

There came a sound at last in the quiet house, and a light flashed into the room, and he knew that human sympathy and human pity were doing all for him that woman's gentle ministry could do.

Had he lost consciousness? he wondered. All and everything seemed so far off and indistinct. He struggled to regain sense and feeling. He heard a voice droning out: "Lieber Gott!" who can wonder?

All day long and neither bite nor sup. There was death in his face when he came in, and he has sat there like a stone or a log, never moving nor speaking. Enough to frighten any one, I say."

Something was at his lips, and he drank it mechanically. His brain cleared, he looked up, and met Anna von Waldstein's eyes.

"Forgive me," he said. "I am very foolish. I fasted too long. I—I did not know how the time passed."

"You were indeed foolish, my friend," said the sad-faced woman, seating herself beside him as he lay on the couch. "You must think of yourself. Let the worldly and the frivolous waste their lives, if they like; but not such a man as you."

"You think too well of me," he said wearily. "I am glad you have returned. Tell me . . ."

His voice faltered; but she understood well enough what he would have asked.

"She has quite recovered," she said gently, "and when I left her was calm and tranquil. She will sleep, I trust, for she will need all her strength to-morrow."

"It is to-morrow then?" he said faintly.

"Yes. I thought once I could not have borne it; but I, too, have grown resigned, and I can see now it is all for the best—all for the best."

"It is easier," he said drearily, "to say that, than to feel it."

"You will feel it in time," she answered with grave tenderness. "You have suffered, I know."

"Yes," he echoed, as he pushed the hair from off his throbbing brow, "I have suffered greatly. Sometimes I wonder why . . . where is the use—the purpose?"

"You have taught it to others—can you not realise it yourself?"

"Not to-night," he said faintly. "No, not to-night. There is nothing in my heart but one bitter sense of loss—a loss cruel as death."

"Yes," she said, "I know. I feared it long ago. I read her heart better than she herself could read it. I think that, when the knowledge came to her, it moved her to take this step. It was the only thing she could do. You will see that yourself some day."

"Did you counsel her to take this step?"

"I? Oh no. I never knew of it until she was safe within the Convent. It was very sudden, her resolve. We were in London, and she had an engagement to

teach German, that took her out every morning. One morning she left as usual, then came back and put together all her clothes, and went away without saying anything or leaving any message. I came home at night, and she was gone; but later on came a note, begging me to go to an hotel named, and I should hear of her. I forget now the name. It was a grand and beautiful place, I know; and I went, and there I saw Miss Kenyon."

Adrian Lyle started up. The blood flushed his brow a sudden dusky red.

"She! How could she know anything of her?"

"She knew—everything," answered his companion. "She told me that it was the only thing left for Gretchen to do, and that she had advised her to do it, and had given her money and arranged it all. I was furious. You know how proud she is, and how haughty. Almost I lost my self-command; but I struggled for calmness, and I did the only thing I could do—I followed my child here. At first I tried to persuade her to alter her determination, but I found it was useless. Miss Kenyon had exacted a promise from her, and she said that nothing would induce her to break it."

Adrian Lyle buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud. How plainly he saw it all now! Poor child, poor little struggling Gretchen, confronted with this cold and merciless tyrant, who had neither pity nor mercy in her heart! He felt how every shred of comfort must have been torn away; how the knowledge of shame and misery had been left to eat into her very soul; until the agony had been beyond her strength to bear, and she had fled to the only shelter that had promised refuge and concealment! And it was her own sister who had condemned her to such a fate—her own sister!

How could he tell that a passion, hopeless and cruel as its own force, had burnt in that wild heart with a flame fierce enough to destroy all and everything that stood in its way, recking nothing of pain, sorrow, misery, so only the path it trod were clear, and far from even the shadow of a rival.

"Do not grieve," went on his companion presently. "Believe me, if I, her mother, who loved her beyond and above all earth holds, can feel it is best, you too, in time, will acknowledge it also. Not now—not for long perhaps; but the sting will lose its sharpness, and the pain be lulled to rest.

Heaven does not let us suffer for ever ; and you will see, as I see now, that your love would only have been a cruel temptation to you both. Remember what you are—you owe a duty to the world that you must not forget ; and how could she take her place by your side when her history is known to be one of shame, and every scornful finger is free to point at her as the woman who has stood in a criminal's dock ? . . . You will see—you must see what she has seen to-day . . . I but repeat what her own lips said. You could not raise her to your level. The world would not allow it ; and though you might be brave enough to despise it and its opinions, a time would come when they would make themselves heard and felt, and then neither she nor you would know a happy hour. For Neale Kenyon it would be different. But you . . . you have a blameless past—a great and noble calling. The blast of shame would wither all that was best in you : it is hard now, but it would be a thousand times harder then. Do not think me cold and unpitying to say this. You are the truest, noblest friend that ever man or woman could desire. . . . Heaven alone can reward you for what you have done for my child and for me ; and it will reward you, I am sure. Will you not try and believe it, so that I may take some comfort to her to-morrow—before—before the end comes ?”

The brave voice failed and grew uncertain ; but the face that looked back to that worn, suffering face of Adrian Lyle's, was calm and hopeful still.

“You are right,” he said, “and so was she. Do not think I failed to acknowledge that even when it was most hard.”

“And,” she asked gently, “what shall I say—for you ?”

“Tell her,” he said, “that I will bless her and love her till the last hour I live. That life henceforth will own but one hope—the hope that Heaven may grant what earth has forbidden.”

A silence, profound as death, followed on these low-breathed words. The sacredness of Death seemed to seal them ; and truly naught but Death could ever break the seal.

The next day, at dusk, a veiled woman sought Adrian Lyle's rooms, and placed in his hands a small packet.

He took it and touched it with his lips, as they faltered the one question the live-long day had framed.

“It is—ended ?”

“Yes,” was the solemn answer. “It is ended. She is vowed to Heaven now.”

Once more alone in the dark night—once more alone whilst the convent bells tolled slowly, solemnly, their mournful truth : “Life begins—Life suffers—Life ends.” Once more alone, with his eyes gazing blindly on a long, bright tress of hair telling its own story of a life's sacrifice—bearing on it the last words Gretchen's hands would ever pen to him—“Auf Wiedersehen !”

LITERARY GIANTS.

DR. ADAM SMITH is recorded to have expressed his thankfulness for the information that the author of “Paradise Lost” wore latchets in his shoes instead of buckles. If a political economist found it useful to have such apparently trifling information, it is surely justifiable for other people to enquire what their favourite heroes were like, what they wore, how they wrote, and a dozen other things throwing light upon their character.

Different men form, as a matter of course, different impressions of their fellows ; but, on comparing notes, it is, in most cases, comparatively easy to arrive at a just conclusion in any dispute affecting character.

Take De Quincey's appearance, for instance. Crabb Robinson met him in 1812, and said that “his person is small, his complexion fair, and his air and manner are those of a sickly and enfeebled man.” Mr. James Payn met him in Edinburgh at a dinner-party, and describes him as a “very diminutive man, carelessly—very carelessly—dressed ; a face lined, careworn, and so expressionless that it reminded one of ‘that chill, changeless brow, where cold obstruction's apathy appals the gazing mourner's heart’—a face like death in life. The instant he began to speak, however, it lit up as though by electric light ; this came from his marvellous eyes, brighter and more intelligent (though by fits) than I have ever seen in any other mortal. They seem to me to glow with eloquence.”

Many celebrated men were small in stature, and their appearance at first sight was disappointing. Dr. Watts was once in a coffee-house, when he overheard a gentleman ask rather contemptuously : “What,

is that the great Dr. Watts?" in the hearing of the doctor, who, turning round, repeated the following stanza from his lyric poems:

Were I so tall to reach the pole,
Or grasp the ocean with a span,
I must be measured by my soul—
The mind's the standard of the man.

Whilst it cannot be denied that a fine appearance is of great advantage to any man, it is remarkable that some of the most famous men in the world have been small in body. Renan, the French free-thinker, describes St. Paul as an ugly little Jew. But the famous French philosopher is no great beauty himself, being short, fat, and rosy.

A small body has, however, compensating advantages. Though small in body, Thiers was a giant in intellect. This great French statesman and historian deliberately tried, when a young man, to become an accomplished man of the world, a feat made difficult by many physical defects. Mr. James Macdonell gives, in "France Since the First Empire," a graphic picture of the way in which Thiers accomplished his purpose:

"He was scarcely five feet high, and his figure was squat, and ungraceful. The nearness of his sight obliged him to wear spectacles, and the bright intelligence of his square, compact face was set off by no grace of feature. His voice was shrill, and he spoke with a southern accent, amusing to fastidious Parisian ears.

"His gestures were awkward, incessant, almost grotesque. He was absolutely wanting in that repose and ease of manner which form the crowning grace of good breeding. Yet he overcame many of these defects by laborious attention to the small as well as the great accomplishments of life. He made himself a good rider at the expense of some falls, and also of the acquaintance with men whose talk was of nothing but horses. He dined out a great deal. He frequented those cafés which are the clubs of the Parisians, and astonished people by the abundance and eloquence of his talk on every subject under the sun.

"He was to be seen night after night in the drawing-rooms of M. Laffette, gesticulating, denouncing the government, pouring out epigrams, explaining the details of finance, dogmatizing about the mysteries of military strategy, or discussing the artistic monuments of the Renaissance. Talleyrand, the shrewdest spirit of the time, predicted that he would become

great, and made him the subject of one of his 'mots.' 'Thiers,' he said, 'is not a "parvenu"; he is an "arrivé." There was also a touch of romance in his career at this time, for he had to fight a duel with the father of a young lady at Aix whom he was said to have jilted, and he was nearly shot. He became, in short, one of the best known men in Paris."

Mr. Matthew Davenport Hill, who saw Thiers in 1848, described him as a little, grey-headed man, vivacious even for a Frenchman; "he indulges in violent gesticulations of an angular character, and hops about the tribune in a very droll manner, between his handkerchief in one corner and a glass of water in another, to both of which he makes frequent application."

Mezzofanti, who knew sixty-four languages, and spoke forty-eight, was described by Caroline Fox as a little, bright-eyed, wiry man. Louis Blanc was a man of very short stature, natty in his dress, dainty-handed, with a small piping voice, a boyish face, and hair which fell angelically over his shoulders.

The greatest number of little men are found among authors. Longfellow was small physically. So were Pope, Jeffrey, Campbell, Tom Moore, and Charles Lamb. Carlyle described Charles Lamb as "the leanest of mankind, wearing tiny black breeches buttoned to the knee-cap, surmounting spindle legs also in black, face and head fineish, black, bony, lean, and of a Jew-type rather." Carlyle was not always accurate in his descriptions of men whom he met, but this account agrees with all the portraits of gentle Elia, the best of which was the sketch by Maclise.

Douglas Jerrold was a little, round-shouldered, sharp-faced man. Tom Moore was such a "little, wizen figure," that George the Fourth once threatened to clap him into a wine cooler; and Rogers, the famous London banker, was not only small, but so ugly as to be thought worth immortalising by Lord Byron, in a poem which begins:

With nose and chin that make a knooker,
With wrinkles that defy old Cocker.

There can be no doubt that Rogers was very ugly. Lord Ward, afterwards Earl Dudley, asked him how it was since he was so well off he did not set up his hearse. A French valet, mistaking him for Tom Moore, announced him to an astonished company as "Monsieur La Mort!" and a story appeared to the effect that when Rogers one night hailed a hackney coach,

the jarvey cried: "Ho, ho, my man, I'm not going to be had in that way. Go back to your grave."

Rogers was a poet, as well as a banker; and his production of two volumes, "Poems," and "Italy," is said to have cost twelve thousand pounds. Mr. S. C. Hall says that Rogers had not only "a repellent countenance," but a "shrivelled heart and a contracted soul."

Leslie, the artist, had an equally bad opinion of the poet. In his autobiography he says that when he and his daughters were at Brighton, Mr. Rogers took them in his carriage to the Dyke. "As we sat in his carriage looking over the vast expanse of country below us, he pointed down to a village that seemed all peace and beauty in the tranquil sunset.

"Do you see," he said, "those three large tombstones close to the tower of the church? My father, my mother, and my grandfather are buried there." Leslie told Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton the anecdote himself, and imitated Rogers' tone of voice which he says was most pathetic. Now the truth was that Rogers had not a single relative in that churchyard, and the only foundation for what he said, as he soon afterwards confessed, was that he would have liked to be buried there himself. Somebody, on hearing the story, exclaimed, "What a lying old rascal!"

Rogers was not precisely that. Without being a great poet he had much artistic feeling, and for a moment he heightened the interest of the peaceful churchyard by going beyond the truth, by leaving the truth behind as insufficient for the degree of sympathy and interest which he desired to produce in his hearers.

Enough has been said about "short" men. It seems superfluous to add that smallness of body does not necessarily mean weakness of mind, and the illustrations given show that mind, not body, makes the man. At the same time many of our giants in literature were giants in size. Dr. Johnson was once mistaken for a watchman. "A gentlewoman," said Dr. Johnson, "begged I would give her my arm to assist her in crossing the street, which I accordingly did; upon which she offered me a shilling, supposing me to be the watchman. I perceived she was somewhat in liquor." "This," adds Boswell, "if told by most people, would have been thought an invention; when told by Johnson, it was believed by his friends, as much as if they had seen what passed."

The gentlewoman, however, might have taken him for the watchman, without being in liquor, if she had no eye to discern a great man through his uncouthness. Davies, the bookseller, said that he laughed like a rhinoceros. It may be added that he walked like a whale; for it was rolling rather than walking. "I met him in Fleet Street," says Boswell, "walking, or rather, indeed, moving along"; for his peculiar march is thus described in a very just and picturesque manner, in a short life of him published very soon after his death: "When he walked the streets, what with the constant roll of his head, and the concomitant motion of his body, he appeared to make his way by that motion independent of his feet." "That he was often much stared at," continues Boswell, "while he advanced in this manner, may be easily believed; but it was not safe to make sport of one so robust as he was. Mr. Langton saw him one day, in a fit of absence, by a sudden start, drive the load off a porter's back, and walk forward briskly, without being conscious of what he had done. The porter was very angry, but stood still, and eyed the huge figure with much earnestness, till he was satisfied that his wisest course was to be satisfied, and take up his bundle again."

Coleridge, by the way, had a curious gait. Hazlitt, in speaking of his first acquaintance with Coleridge, says: "I observed that he continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the footpath to the other. This struck me as an odd movement, but I did not at the time connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since."

This description of the poet's undulating walk exactly coincides with his character. Shelley's walk, we learn from one of his biographers, was like his character, full of remarkable contrasts, displaying a mixture or alternation of awkwardness with agility, of the clumsy with the graceful. He would stumble in stepping across the floor of a drawing-room, would trip himself up on a smooth-shaven grass-plot, or tumble about in the most inconceivable manner in ascending an easy, well-carpeted staircase, so as to bruise his nose or lips on the upper steps, or tread upon his hands in such a way as to disturb the composure even of a well-bred footman. On the other hand, he would often glide without collision through crowded assemblies, or thread with unerring dexterity a most intricate path,

and tread securely and rapidly the most arduous and uncertain ways.

Wordsworth, also, was a character. He was so like Milton in personal appearance that De Quincey considered the head of the author of "Paradise Lost" presented not only the best likeness of Wordsworth, but of Wordsworth in the prime of his powers. He was not a well-made man, however, his great drawback being his legs, which appear to have been very unsightly; but, as De Quincey estimates that Wordsworth walked a distance of one hundred and seventy-five thousand or one hundred and eighty thousand miles, they could not have been otherwise than serviceable.

Moreover, his appearance in the lanes could hardly have been as odd as that of Dr. Johnson in Fleet Street. One of the villagers said that they had heard him mutter, as he walked, in some outlandish tongue that nobody could understand. No doubt this was their version of the poet's own words:

He murmurs near the running brooks,
A music sweeter than their own.

Another villager said that he had seen him wander about at night, and look rather strangely at the moon; a third declared that he roamed over the hills like a partridge. One party regarded him as a lunatic; whilst another expressed his conviction that he was a smuggler, because they had frequently met him tramping towards the sea.

Thackeray was exceptionally tall and big; Jerrold small and bent, but with a grand head and wonderful, bright, piercing eyes. But one of the most conspicuous of literary men, so far as his physical proportions went, was Professor Wilson.

"A tall, ruddy figure, with plenteous blonde hair, with bright-blue eyes," is the description which Carlyle gives of "Christopher North." Another writer gives a more graphic picture of this versatile Professor: "A sixteen-stoner, who has tried it without the gloves with the Game Chicken, and got none the worse; a cocker, a racer, a six-bottler, a twenty-four tumbler, an out-and-outer, a true, upright, knocking-down, poetical, prosaic, moral, professorial, hard-drinking, fierce-eating, good-looking, honourable, straightforward Tory. Let us not forget that he has leapt twenty-seven feet in a standing leap, on plain ground! Byron never ceased boasting of the petty feat of swimming three or four miles with the tide, as something wondrous. What

is it to Wilson's leaping? In what is he not great!"

Christopher North was not much like a man of letters. Neither was Anthony Trollope, of whom Mr. James Payn says that he was the least literary man he ever met. Appearances are often deceptive. Trollope's manners were rough and ready; but he had a tender heart and a strong sense of duty.

"FOUNDERED."

GAILY she sailed from the Northern port, in the dawn of the April day,
When the sunrise touched the Nab's black crest,
and blushed over Whitby Bay.

Father and two bold sons were there, as blithe as the morn all three.

"What ails thee, mate," to the fourth they said,
"does aught go wrong with thee?"

"By the birds that swoop round Kettleness, there's fish where our lines we set,
And the brave new coble springs to her work, as no boat has served us yet."

"Ay, the coble's tight and strong enow, an' I know what the sea-gulls mean,
But I left my missus bad up there," and he glanced at the headland green,

Where a red roof hung like a marten's nest, and his bold brown eyes grew dim;
With kindly cheer and honest jest, his fellows heartened him.

Or ever the sun was high at noon, the bright blue sky was black,
The wild white horses tossed their crests over the gathering wrack;

Over the grey seas fast and fierce, through the clouds of flying foam,
The squall swept on from the cruel east—the boat was far from home.

Three women watched from the great pier head, through the black and bitter night;
One lay and shivered to hear the blast, as it rushed o'er the rocky height,

And nestled closely to her side lay her little newborn son,
While the women said, "He'll be back to sea, long ere the day is done."

But ever the pale cheek flushed and burned, and ever the eyes grew wild;
She bade them take the babe away, "for he'll never see his child."

Many a boat in bootless search flew over the lessening waves,
Many a keen eye strained its sight, from the Head with its crowded graves;

But the April days, in shade and shine, passed in a deepening pain,
And never over the harbour bar came the "Whitby Lass" again.

Hope sank and rose, and sank and died; the fishermen knew at last,
That from deep-sea harvest and busy staithes, four gallant "hands" had passed.

They found the boat on the flowing tide, ere the year to winter grew;
Her sails were rent, her block was jammed, her strop was half cut through.

That was all to tell of the desperate strife that for Life and Death they made,
Who sank to the depths of the great North Sea,
with never a hand to aid.

"CLOSER THAN A BROTHER."

By G. B. STUART.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I. NEWS.

SOME English people are very fond of saying that the heat is "positively tropical," when an unexpectedly warm day in July makes the London pavements burn and glare; these are generally people who have never been in the tropics, or experienced such a day as that on which the senior partner on Wambo rode in to the Roper Township in search of letters. The junior partner, who lay smoking in a squatter's chair on the verandah of their station hut, greeted his chum's return with a hearty "Well, old man, what news?" for an up-country neighbour, passing by a week before, had left word that there were letters for Wambo at the Post Office in Roper, and this intelligence had occasioned John Buldeel's ride.

"A letter and a newspaper for me; nothing for you," said John Buldeel wearily.

"Well?" His partner was a man of few words.

"My father is dead, and has left me everything."

"By Jove!"

Buldeel was dismounting heavily, and did not notice the flush on his companion's face, nor the trembling of the hands busied about the girths of "Messenger's" saddle; he sat down on the edge of the verandah, leaving his partner to attend to the horse. A significant fact, enough, which overpowered the first surprise of the news from England.

"What's wrong, Buldeel? Are you ill?"

"Only this confounded heat has knocked me over a bit," and, rather shamefacedly, "the letter and all——"

"I see; there's my flask just inside the window; I'll see to 'Messenger';" and John Bell led the horse away to the paddock, first carefully washing his back with a pannikin of water from the iron water-tank, though his head was in a whirl, and his heart beat almost to suffocation.

It had come then! Buldeel's summons home. Bell had always felt that it must come sooner or later, in spite of Jack's assurances that he had sinned beyond the forgiveness of that respectable English

county family to which he belonged, or rather had belonged, fifteen years before, when he and Bell first met. Fifteen years of roughing it in Queensland, had pretty well obliterated the traces of the county family in John Buldeel; in looks and manners there was very little to choose now between him and John Bell, the steerage passenger, with whom he had accidentally chummed in the yard of the "Queen's Hotel," Brisbane, the first day that they both set foot in the new land. Their friendship had never been broken from that moment; through rough ways they had pushed together, oddly satisfied with each other, and for some time with no ambition beyond the desire to live. Six years ago, however, they had found themselves in a position to venture on the acquisition of Wambo, and then Bell had felt that his unacknowledged longing "to be a gentleman" was beginning to take a visible form. It is true that he and Buldeel worked as hard on their own run as ever they had done in their days of servitude; but the feeling was different, Bell confessed to himself, carefully hiding his weakness from Buldeel, hiding also that dread that was ever with him, that, some day, his chum would be recalled to England, and leave him on Wambo alone.

The call had come, and as Bell, leaning over the alip-rails, watched "Messenger" making his way down the paddock to join his mates, he knew that the partnership of Wambo was dissolved, and that henceforward his path in life must diverge from Buldeel's as sharply as if for fifteen years they had not run parallel. He set his teeth tightly together as he came back to the hut, where his partner still sat inert, only with a newspaper across his knee to show how he had been employed, and which way his thoughts ran, in spite of his affected indifference.

John Bell set the water boiling for tea, and put out the damper and cooked beef. He was terribly impatient to hear what Buldeel had to tell; but he dreaded it beyond all confessing, and postponed the story as long as possible by unnecessary fidgeting about the hut, and unusually minute arrangements for the night. George, their head man, was away, rationing the distant shepherds, which, no doubt, gave the junior partner extra work, but scarcely enough to account for this restless uneasiness. Meanwhile, Buldeel quietly ate his supper in an absent, uninterested fashion, now and again pouring whisky

out of the flask into his mug of tea. Bell covered his want of appetite with a considerable clatter, and at last the meal was finished, the pipes filled, and the moment came for explanation. Bell could bear it no longer.

"Well, what do you mean to do?"

"I don't mean to do anything."

"Not go home?"

"No."

The junior partner sat staring at his chum, making out only a dim shape and a glowing point of light as Bulteel took out his pipe, poked at it carefully, and lighted another match against the rough texture of his sleeve. Could he be in his right mind? Did he know what he was saying?

"You are not going back to take possession of Bulteel?"

"No."

"Where shall you go, then?"

"Nowhere; stop on at Wambo, I suppose."

"And your property; your place; your family——"

"Confound it, Bell. Shut up! How can I decide all in an instant what I will do? I wish to goodness I had never let old Taper know my whereabouts, and all this worry would have been avoided. You are in a deuce of a hurry to get rid of me."

John Bell allowed this to pass. Bulteel often let fly at him in this fashion; but such fretfulness never elicited any answer from the junior partner, and, as usual, Bulteel tried to make amends immediately by a sort of explanation.

"You see I've settled down to the work here, and I'm completely unsettled as regards English life by now. You know about my sister and the stepmother at home. What sort of a figure should I cut in their drawing-room? Actually you know less about drawing-rooms than I do, I believe"—Bell winced in the darkness—"but I bet you'd make a better hand at it than I if you came to try it, you're such a quick, quiet, imitative chap. No, no, Bell; I shall stop on here and make a big thing of it, and if you like to have Bulteel for the next ten years or so, you may; what a game if you went and took them all in! They haven't seen me for fifteen years, and even old Taper's dead—it is a nephew who writes—but I would rather you stayed on here, and help me to run Wambo as the biggest concern this side of Worcester Plains."

John Bell cleared his husky throat and spoke with unwonted diffidence.

"Haven't you—isn't it," he hesitated; "isn't it rather your duty to go home and see after your English property?"

Bulteel positively gasped to hear his chum talking of duty; then: "What duty have they ever fulfilled towards me, I should like to know?" he demanded fiercely. "My father turned me out of doors for a piece of boyish extravagance; my sister was told to forget me, and seems to have succeeded admirably in doing so; all the family have shaken their heads over me as a lost sheep for fifteen years or more, and now that they like to change their minds I am to go back, hat in hand, and spend my time and my money on patching up their mouldy old estate which they have probably mortgaged and denuded of every stick of value, just to keep up the name of Bulteel! Duty! no, thank you; I have no example to teach me my duty, and I prefer my pleasure as my father did before me, which at this present moment takes the harmless form of rearing sheep in Queensland. I doubt if the old man ever employed himself so profitably or so innocently!"

Bell knew very well that, if his friend began to talk about his father, the conversation was likely to take an unnecessarily violent form, so he deftly interposed a question.

"Shall you write to the lawyer and tell him you mean to remain out here?"

"That can wait a bit! They need not know that their letter has reached me yet, which, by the way, it wouldn't have done if Stevens hadn't mentioned having seen it at Roper. I half wish he had held his tongue. We were all right without it, eh?"

"Of course." John Bell always spoke gruffly when he was moved, and Bulteel, in spite of his selfishness, his fretfulness, his imperious ways, had power to move his friend as no other living creature could.

"I shall turn in," Bulteel announced, getting up stiffly and knocking out his pipe. "I'm sick of the whole affair, and shall be glad to forget all about it. Tomorrow I shall look up McIntyre; George will be back by the end of the week, and I ought to have settled about the fencing. I feel I've wasted a good day's work by going in to Roper, and must make up for it tomorrow. By-the-bye, is 'Messenger's' back all right?"

"Yes, all right. I washed him over before turning him out."

"Sixty-six miles, with fourteen stone on his back, and the heat of the burning, fiery furnace! He's stronger than I am, for I felt it uncommonly."

"Better let me do McIntyre in the morning."

"Nonsense! I shall be all right after a sleep. Good-night!" said John Bulteel.

Long after his partner slept soundly, John Bell lay awake, revolving what manner of change this might be which had suddenly broken the monotony of their lives. He could not divest himself of the conviction that the old life on Wambo was at an end!

CHAPTER II. CHANGES.

EXTRACTS from a letter from John Bulteel of Wambo, to Messrs. Batten and Harris, Agents, Brisbane:

"Rockhampton, 25th January, 18—.

"I shall be obliged if you can send someone up to Wambo at once to take charge, until you can realise everything, without reservation. . . .

"Family business requires my immediate return to England, and I have been so unnerved by the tragic fate of my poor partner, that I have been glad to leave the station in the temporary care of two Scotchmen, who stopped at Wambo on their way to Worcester Plains, the very night that poor Bell was missing. One of them was with me when we found the body, and they helped to bury him, and can give all information to the authorities as to locality, etc. I have communicated with the police-station at Roper, and have referred to Messrs. Gregg and Thompson should any enquiries be thought necessary.

"The shepherd, George Strutt, who was up country at the time, will have returned by now. Mr. Bell and I had the highest confidence in his management, and can heartily recommend him to anyone purchasing Wambo. . . .

"Any communications can be addressed to me, care of Messrs. Taper, Twisden and Son, Solicitors, Bedford Row, London, as I sail to-morrow by the 'Ludlow Castle;' but I leave the disposal of Wambo entirely in your hands, being confident that I could not do better, and that you will most carefully protect the interests which I am obliged to abandon in this summary manner. . . .

"I am, dear Sirs, very faithfully yours,

"JOHN BULTEEL."

There is but little to explain after

giving these extracts. John Bell, apparently having overruled his partner's objections, started on the day following Bulteel's ride to Roper, on the expedition to McIntyre's, the fencer's, camp on the scrubby western boundary of Wambo, where the wild blacks had been troublesome two years before, though quiet of late. Bell did not return in the evening, but Bulteel felt no uneasiness on this account, till another day passed without his reappearance; then, in company with two travellers who had stopped at Wambo on their way up country, he went out in search of his friend. They followed his track for some eighteen miles, till, by a water-hole, where he had encamped for a spell, and had fallen asleep with his head on his saddle, they found John Bell just as he had lain down to rest; but with a black fellow's spear through his heart. His horse, with its broken hobble-chain, was presently captured and brought back by the Scotchman, Gregg, proving that the assassin had caught Bell in cold blood, and had made good his escape without even the ulterior object of plunder.

The place where the body lay being nearly twenty miles from the head-station, and considerable delay having already occurred, Bulteel deemed it advisable to bury his late partner at once, and on the spot. He rode back for spades, etc., and with the help of Gregg and Thompson, laid poor Bell in a shallow grave, under the very tree where he had met with his fate, without removing the spear from the wound, in order to satisfy the vigilance of justice should an officer from Roper be sent up to view the body.

On his return to the station, Bulteel drew up a short statement of the occurrence, which was signed by the two Scotch visitors, who further promised to remain upon the station until the stockman's return, or the arrival of a manager, provided by Messrs. Batten and Harris, the agents.

Bulteel, shocked and broken down by the terrible catastrophe which had robbed him of his friend of fifteen years' close companionship, decided to sail immediately for England from the nearest port, Rockhampton; regarding the recall to England in a very different light since the events of the last two days had rendered Wambo and all its belongings abhorrent to him. He left the station the very next morning, in temporary charge of the two witnesses to poor Bell's fate, and sailed for England by the "Ludlow Castle," from Rockhampton.

In due time an officer of police from Roper arrived at Wambo, and was shown the grave of John Bell, which he examined sufficiently to satisfy himself that the spear wound was the cause of death. Afterwards, Gregg and Thompson deposed on oath to having met the deceased riding out as they approached the station on their arrival; to his having cordially invited them to turn in and stay, till his return, with his partner, who had entertained them for two days, and in whose company they had made the discovery of poor Bell's murder. They explained the necessity which Bulteel was under of getting off to England by the first mail, owing to family news just received, and were able to exonerate his sudden disappearance from any suspicious colour that it might have worn, by the frank explanations of detail as to how the two days had been passed by themselves and Bell's partner during the murdered man's absence.

They had noticed that he looked worn and out of sorts when he met them on the track some five miles above the station. He had greeted them genially, and had told them they were to tell his partner that "they would stop for a rubber in the evening;" but he had ridden away listlessly, and Gregg had remarked that the fellow had a heavy look as if he were in for fever. He had never reached McIntyre, a matter of only twenty-six miles; but apparently overcome by fatigue or sudden illness, had unsaddled at the water-hole, close to the western frontier of the run, where some fencing was under consideration. And here, in his sleep, the black fellow's spear had found him.

"These back-track ridges are the very mischief!" said the police officer vehemently. "You never know how near these black fellows may be lurking. Such a long piece of scrub on its western boundary is very much against Wambo in the market!" To which Thompson and Gregg, who were pushing on north, heartily agreed.

So much for Wambo, which, in spite of the officer's prediction, quickly found a new owner, and passed out of John Bulteel's hands for ever. In a few months, he and his partner, John Bell, were equally forgotten.

CEYLON FOLK-LORE.

THE Singhalese are an astute people, and are not behind other Eastern nations in

their sense of humour. These characteristics exhibit themselves in a marked degree (as do those of all nations) in their proverbs and fables.

A collection of these has been made by one Alexander Mendis Senanayaka, a Singhalese Government Officer, and from them I propose making a selection, enlarging on the original, and adding some which have perhaps not before been printed.

It is the custom among men of Eastern nations, when desirous of contracting a marriage, to secure the good offices of a judicious go-between to make the necessary arrangements with the family of the bride as to dowry, and so on. One of their sayings is, "Like arranging a match for a crocodile," and this proverb, like many others, is connected with a fable, which runs as follows:

A bachelor crocodile, weary of single existence, solicited the kind offices of a jackal to help him to a suitable partner. The jackal of the East is, in cunning, not one whit behind his Western relative, the fox; in fact, in knowingness, the former may be said to have the advantage.

Master Jack told his dupe, the crocodile, that he knew of a young lady who would suit him exactly. "But," said he, "she lives on the other side of the river, which I have no means of crossing."

"That need not stand in your way," said the amorous saurian; "jump on my back and you shall be carried over in a trice."

"Done!" said the jackal, as he fixed his claws in the crocodile's scales.

In a few minutes he stood on the opposite bank. "Stay here for me," said he, running off into the jungle.

Now Master Jackal knew full well that there was no bride in those parts for the love-sick swain, nor did he propose troubling himself in the matter at all. His keen nose had caught the scent of a dead buffalo lying on that side of the river, on whose carcase he longed to regale himself. And while the expectant crocodile, filled with soft thoughts, lay waiting to hear the result of the jackal's overtures, that faithless gentleman was enjoying to the full his savoury repast.

Having eaten till he could eat no more, he returned to the bank of the river, and explained that, unfortunately, the father of the lady had gone to a neighbouring village, and would not return till night-fall; but that he had ascertained from an astrologer what time on the morrow would

be propitious for making further advances. Here the cunning rogue mentioned the hour of his habitual mid-day meal.

There was no course left for the crocodile but to swim back with his false friend, and hope for better luck next day.

At the appointed hour next morning, they met again, and the crocodile a second time carried the deceiver across the stream. The latter, after enjoying himself as on the previous day, came back, saying that he had seen the father, who was not ill-disposed towards the union, but thought it better to take counsel with his brother, whom he would see that evening. He declared also, that there was every reason to hope that matters would be satisfactorily arranged next day.

Day after day did this unsuspecting victim of misplaced confidence carry his treacherous friend backwards and forwards across the stream, until the last morsel of buffalo flesh had been devoured, and naught remained but the bones, horns, and hoofs. Not one fragment of the banquet was ever brought to the unhappy crocodile, and all he had to feed on was the unsatisfactory banquet of deferred hope.

Finally, having no further need of the amphibian's assistance, when once more he was borne to the shore nearest home, the crafty jackal nimbly springing to land, ran off to the jungle; and as he reached its skirts he turned round, and whisking his tail in the air, exclaimed in derisive tones, "What marriages for crocodiles that live in rivers!"

It is well to have a wife of a frugal mind, who tries to turn all things to the best account. But it is possible she may carry the principle too far, as is shown in the following story of a villager's spouse.

It is the custom in Ceylon to present the village barber, at the end of the year, with a bag of grain, or some article of clothing, in return for the services of his razor.

Among some Eastern races it is thought disgraceful for a man to shave himself, as it is the occupation of a "low-caste" man; and it is not unusual for a person of rank and influence to annoy his humbler neighbours or indulge some grudge against them by interdicting the barber from practising his skill on them. It has more than once fallen to the lot of the writer, as a magistrate, in days gone by, to have all the male members of a village community coming into court with "stubby" visages, black, grizzly, or grey, complaining that

the barber would not shave them, and praying the interference of the judicial officer. Unfortunately the law makes no provision for such contingencies, and all one can do is to offer a little friendly counsel.

But to return to the villager's wife. The barber came one day to shave her husband, but it so happened that he was out at the time, and his wife knowing that the bag of rice would be claimed all the same, and being desirous that the barber should not earn his reward too cheaply, made him shave her head! On her husband's return, she boasted to him how she had been even with the barber, and got her money's worth out of him.

This reminds me of another careful housekeeper, the wife of a worthy old gentleman, of whom it is related that having prepared a black dose for a native neighbour, who neglected to call for it, she, rather than sanction an act of wastefulness, insisted on her husband's swallowing it!

Once upon a time there lived a sage called Mahadenamuttha—"the great counsel giver"—who was consulted on all important or difficult questions.

One day a calf stuck its stupid young head into a pot, and could not get it out again. After trying various methods of extricating the animal's head, its owner resorted to the "adviser-general."

"Bring forth my elephant," said the sage; and the elephant was brought. He mounted it and followed the applicant to his house; but on reaching it the garden gate was found too narrow to admit the elephant.

"Break down the wall," was the next command of the wise man; and it was obeyed. But another obstacle presented itself in the form of an outhouse, and one end of that had to be demolished before the man of resources could gain access to the yard where the calf was still struggling for deliverance.

"Cut off the creature's head," said the dispenser of wisdom, and with prompt obedience the calf was decapitated. "Now smash the pot," was the final command, and the difficulty was solved.

Then, directing that the head should be handed to the owner of the animal, the great man rode off.

The Singhalese have great skill in cookery, and are able to make curries not only of any kind of meat, but of almost any vegetable. One of their favourite curries is composed of a long bean known as the

"drumstick." The price of this vegetable in the market is exceedingly small.

As Vidahne Tantaregey Cornelius Appoo lay stretched upon a mat in the verandah of his cottage one fine morning, his eye rested on the luxuriant blossoms of the murunga, or drumstick tree, which stood in his little enclosure or "compound."

"In a couple of months," thought he to himself, "I shall have as many drumsticks on that tree as will realise one rupee and fifty cents. These I will take to the bazaar, and, having sold them, I will lay out the money in eggs, which I will sell at a profit. With the proceeds I will buy cocoa-nuts, and, after disposing of them—also at a profit—I will buy fowls. This is sure to be a lucrative investment. By continuing to carry fowls to the town, and selling them to the steamers, along with pineapples, plantains, and other fruit, I shall in course of time become a Dubash, or ship-chandler, and make large profits. I will then go into partnership with Don Simon Goonétilliké, who trades with India. I will get my daughter married to his eldest son, and we will import rice and cotton goods from the Madras Presidency. I will then build a fine row of shops facing the road, and there I will store my goods and dispose of them to passers by."

But here he paused and said to himself: "This murunga tree stands just in the spot where the shops will have to come. That will never do." So, springing up, he seized his little axe, and in five minutes the murunga tree lay prostrate under his deft strokes.

"What are you doing?" screamed his wife, who at this moment came to the verandah, attracted by the sound.

Her husband with beaming countenance begged her not to be disturbed, telling her that he hoped in a short time to present her with a set of gold hair-pins instead of those common silver ones she was wearing, and a satin cloth in place of her present cotton print. He then proceeded to explain at length by what steps his wealth was to be acquired, beginning with the drumsticks, and ending with the shops.

"But you have cut down the tree which was to have been the foundation of our fortune!" she cried. And as this fact dawned upon Cornelius Appoo's mind he looked blankly, first at his wife, next at the murunga tree, and then returned to his mat on the verandah, and "shed a bitter tear." Hence the proverb: "Like the cutting down of the drumstick tree."

A jackal one day seized a hen in the garden of a villager and made away with it. Warned by the cries of the hen, the neighbours raised a hue and cry, and ran out to see what was the matter. Thereupon the jackal, silencing the unfortunate hen's screams by ending its existence, dropped her body under a bush. Then seizing a piece of cocoa-nut, he trotted along demurely with that in his mouth, endeavouring to persuade the world that he was a harmless vegetarian.

The proverb runs thus: "The jackal hides the fowl in the jungle, and runs about with cocoa-nut in his mouth."

The drink called "toddy" is the juice extracted from the cocoa-nut palm, and is collected in earthenware pots called "chatties," into which the sap runs during the night from an incision made in the spathe. In the morning the "toddy-drawer," connecting his two feet by a piece of rope, swarms up the smooth trunk of the tree with which he intends commencing operations, and, having reached the lofty summit, he empties the contents of the chatty into a vessel attached to his waist. In order to save himself the fatigue of descending each tree and ascending the next in succession, he passes from one to another by means of two ropes, on one of which his bare feet rest, whilst with his hands he holds on to the other.

These ropes, in course of time become untrustworthy from exposure to weather, and have to be occasionally changed. But too often the unfortunate rope-walker, grown careless by long immunity from accident, neglects to renew his perilous bridge, and the snapping of either rope causes his death. Were the lower rope to break, there might still be hope of clinging to the other, and so working his way along; but should the upper one break, obviously there is little chance of his saving himself, even though the other remained sound. From this comes the proverb: "If the supporting rope breaks one's mainstay is gone."

The Italians have a proverb to the effect that, "if the hen did not cackle no one would know she had laid an egg." The Singhalese have one similar. It is the habit of the turtle to make her way to the shore for the purpose of laying her eggs in the sand; after doing which she silently retreats to her native element. This operation she stealthily repeats day after day, laying in the aggregate a very large number of eggs. The knowledge of

his fact explains the meaning of the saying, 'The turtle makes no noise, even after laying hundreds of eggs, but the cackling of a hen that has laid one egg can be heard in several villages.'

The next story is known as the "Honey-drop tumult," and is intended to show how great events from little causes spring. Though not Singhalese in origin, it is so in spirit, and is essentially Oriental in colour. It is a free translation from the Tamil.

The tale may perhaps be best told in oggerel verse as follows :

THE HONEY-DROP RIOT.

"How great events from little causes spring."

A Mussulman went to a shop
To buy a pot of honey,
This Mussulman he spilt a drop
When counting out the money.

Upon this drop did light a fly,
And as she sucked the nectar,
A lizard that was hid hard by
Came out and straight attacked her.

The shopman's cat was prowling round,
And quick the lizard sighting,
She sprang upon it with one bound,
Through lungs and liver biting.

The Mussulman's lean, hungry dog
Beside the door was lying;
But up he sprang, and all agog
(The wretched cat espying),

He seized her with his great long teeth,
And heedless of her squealing,
He shook her till she ceased to breathe,
And was devoid of feeling.

The shopman to the rescue flew,
And taking up a cleaver,
He chopped the poor dog clean in two,
And forced him thus to leave her.

The Mussulman his "tulwar" drew—
Than he no man was bolder—
He cut the shopman's head right through,
And clove him to the shoulder.

A little girl was passing by,
Who saw the horrid murder;
She ran, and as she ran did cry,
Till all the city heard her.

They rush from east, they rush from west,
With spears or swords or daggers;
Each arms himself as he can best,
And down the street he swaggers.

The Magistrate doth hither ride,
With "posse comitatus,"
And in the ranks on either side
He finds a vast "hiatus."

A hundred here, a hundred there,
Upon the ground are lying,
And mothers weep and tear their hair,
And frantic wives are crying.

And all because a Mussulman
Once bought a pot of honey,
And spilt a little from his can
When counting out the money.

It is customary for charitably-disposed

persons in Ceylon to erect along the high-roads buildings called "ambalama." These are generally sheds with a half-wall round them, where the traveller may spread his mat, cook his food, and rest for the night.

Seven travellers happening to meet at an ambalam agreed that each should put a handful of rice into the pot, and so contribute to a common repast. Each traveller, thinking to feed at the expense of his six comrades, and save his own rice, approached the cooking vessel with an empty hand, and pretended to supply his quatum. The result was a pot of boiling water only, and the proverb is: "Like the 'cunjee' (rice-gruel) that the travellers cooked."

Potters used in former times to carry their brittle ware to market on the back of an elephant. It was, of course, essential that the animal selected for this duty should be an exceedingly docile one. In order to show that the most peaceably-disposed person must sometimes manifest his power, there is a saying that "even a potter's elephant must kill a man once a year."

By way of illustrating the desirability of taking a strong foe at a disadvantage, the Singhalese say: "The right time to hit a savage bull is when he is stuck fast in a mud-hole."

Connubial felicity is liable to interruptions in Ceylon as well as elsewhere, as may be gathered from the following tale: "An unfortunate hen-pecked husband betook himself to a friend's home at a distance to acquaint him of his troubles, and obtain his sympathy and advice. While they were engaged in conversation, the wife of his host rushed into the room in a rage, with a 'chatty'—or earthenware vessel—in her hand, and banged him on the head with it. The result was the inevitable one. The man's head went through the bottom of the vessel, and his neck was encircled by the rim."

"Do you ever see anything like this in your part of the country?" cried the humiliated man.

"Such things do occasionally happen," was the reply. "But I have never seen it quite on this wise."

And he went home thinking that in future he would "rather bear the ills he had, than fly to others that he knew not of."

It sometimes happens in Oriental countries, that daughters are sacrificed by their parents to position and title; "for their good," of course.

The parents of a girl who was thus bestowed in marriage, went to pay her a visit; expecting, naturally, to be entertained with a hospitality corresponding to the husband's rank. Unfortunately, there was nothing in the larder. To express her dissatisfaction at the treatment she had received, the daughter placed an empty pan upon the hearth, and made show of preparing a meal.

The curiosity of the mother being excited, she peeped into the vessel, but saw nothing. "What are you doing, silly girl!" she exclaimed. "I am frying the honour you got for me," was the reply. "There is nothing else!"

A Singhalese blacksmith, who only knew two Tamil words, "namako thereum" (I understand), used them on every possible occasion.

One day, a Tamil man brought him his gun, and requested him to draw the charge of powder and shot, as he was unable to do so himself. The blacksmith understood not one word that was said to him; but, unwilling to betray his ignorance of the language, replied "namako thereum," and proceeded to make a rod of iron red-hot, and to insert it into the barrel. The owner of the gun, divining what he was about, told him most explicitly in Tamil, the nature of the obstruction. To which warning, the foolish blacksmith replied simply, "namako thereum." The next moment he had inserted the iron rod into the muzzle. The result was disastrous. "Namako thereum!"

"As the wild cat ate jungle plantains." A wild cat was so imprudent as to indulge in jungle plantains, which seriously affected his health, and caused him considerable suffering. In his agony he vowed that, if he recovered, he would never touch that fruit again. After a time he did recover, and for a while stuck to his resolution. But one day, going through a different grove of wild plantains, he approached a very tempting bunch, plucked one fruit, and, after looking at it with wistful eyes, threw it away untasted. The next day he found occasion to go the same way. The plantains were still there, and looked even more inviting than on the previous day. He again plucked one, and after eyeing it for some time, ventured to eat it, and proceeded on his way, suffering no ill effects. Next day he ate to his heart's content, remarking that the plantains of that jungle were not unwholesome. Alas, poor cat! His disorder seized him

with increased force, and he fell a victim to his appetite.

The sacred precepts of Buddha are called "Pansil," and are communicated orally by the priests to any who may desire to hear and follow them.

A certain woman, having been to the temple for this purpose, asked her husband, who was a very stupid man, why he, too, did not go and hear "Pansil."

"Because I do not know how to do so," he replied.

"Why, all you have to do," said the wife, "is to repeat whatever the priest says to you."

"If that is all, I will go," said the man.

Accordingly the bumpkin set out for the temple.

On arriving there, the priest seeing him walk rather unceremoniously into the sacred precincts, cried out:

"Hullo! you fellow; where are you going?"

The man, remembering his wife's instructions, answered:

"Hullo! you fellow; where are you going?" and thought he had learned the first precept of "Pansil," which, after all, was not so difficult as he had anticipated.

"Are you mad?" said the priest.

"Are you mad?" was the reply.

"Catch that fellow and give him a thrashing!" said the priest to his attendants.

"Catch that fellow, and give him a thrashing!" repeated the man.

The priest's satellites fell upon him, chastised him severely, and turned him out.

On returning home, he told his wife that, considering she heard "Pansil" once a fortnight, he was surprised at her keeping so well. For his part, the first dose was enough, and he wanted no more of it.

It is an opinion, exceedingly prevalent among Orientals, that, to confer unexpected honour on those not accustomed to it, is sure to have the effect of making them ungrateful and disrespectful.

A King observed that whenever he passed a particular tree, a lizard used to descend the trunk and bow his head, as a mark of respect. The King, therefore, ordered that he should be vested with a golden ear-ring he had had made for him. The heart of the foolish lizard was inflated with pride at this unexpected distinction. He felt sure that the King was alive to those remarkable qualities he had always

felt he possessed, but which the rest of the world had been too ignorant to discern. He had not the least doubt that the King would soon desire to avail himself of his superior wisdom, and while willing to assist him with his sage counsel, he did not think it expedient to make himself too cheap. So, the next time the King came by his tree he turned his back upon him, and paid no attention to him whatsoever.

A certain King was desirous of having a statue of Buddha constructed of pure gold. Accordingly, he summoned the master goldsmith of his court and gave him the necessary instructions, but required him to carry on the work at the royal palace, under close supervision, that there might not be the slightest suspicion that the precious metal had been alloyed. The goldsmith undertook to fulfil the requirements of the King, and then proceeded to his own house to fetch the implements of his trade.

Calling his two sons before him, he told them the commands of the King, and under what strict surveillance his operations would have to be conducted. Then, turning to the younger, he asked him to what extent he thought it would be possible for him to debase the gold with which he would be supplied. He replied that under the circumstances he hardly thought it possible for one to possess himself of more than a fourth part of the metal. He then asked the elder son what he had to say, and he answered that possibly so skilful an artist as his father might be able to appropriate one-half. Their father directed towards them a look of acorn, and, gathering together his tools, left the house without saying a word.

When he arrived at the palace he commenced his work under the direct supervision of one of the most trusted nobles; while every precaution was taken to prevent any fraud.

When the day's labour was over the goldsmith was carefully searched before being allowed to depart.

On reaching home he called his two sons, and with their aid commenced making, of base metal, a statue exactly resembling the one he had begun at the palace.

Day by day the work progressed at the palace, and night after night was the labour continued at home, until the day came when the finishing touch was put to the statue of gold, and it was duly submitted to the King for approval. His Majesty

was delighted both with the design and its execution, and bade the goldsmith name what reward he desired in addition to the proper wages. The goldsmith bowed to the ground, and replied that he had only one request to make, which was that he might be permitted the privilege of bearing the image in state to the temple where it was to be deposited. "But," said he, "as I am an unclean man, and this is a sacred thing, I pray that I may be allowed to purify it at the tank near the temple before handing it over to the priests."

The monarch readily acceded to so pious a wish, and an auspicious hour was fixed upon by the royal astrologers, when, to the sound of trumpets, drums, and pipes, the procession should set out from the palace to the shrine. All the arrangements were duly made, and, at the appointed time, with elephants, banners, and yellow-robed priests, the goldsmith, carrying the golden image on his head, marched proudly in front; while last of all, surrounded by his guards, came the Rajah himself.

Through the admiring crowd, drawn up on either side of the principal street, the gay procession passed. At length they reached the tank, and halted. Then the goldsmith, descending the steps, stepped into the water, and, reverently lowering the image, immersed it for a few moments. After a brief interval he reascended the steps, carefully wiped the moisture from the image, and bore it to the entrance of the temple, where it was solemnly made over to the priests. The goldsmith made his obeisance to the King, and went home. The shrine was carefully secured, and there the statue remained, a thing of beauty and a joy for years to worshippers, none of whom, from the King downwards, doubted for a single instant that the image was the identical one whose fashioning had been conducted under such unusual precautions. And yet the dishonest goldsmith had effected his purpose, and, ere long, the golden image was in the melting pot, while its base counterfeit occupied the place of honour in the temple.

How was this accomplished?

That morning, ere the first streak of dawn had lightened the eastern horizon, the figure of a man might have been seen stealing to the tank, bearing under his arm what, on inspection, would have proved to be an image of Buddha. Noiselessly descending into the water, he placed the image at the bottom of the tank, and

returned as secretly as he came. It was this statue and not the golden one that the goldsmith, later on in the day, bore from the tank to the temple, and so cunningly had he copied the original that none for a moment suspected the fraud.

At the dead of the following night the same dusky figure once more crept to the tank, and, taking up the precious image, carried it off to his house, and appropriated the whole of the gold.

Are we to infer from some of these anecdotes that fraud and chicanery are held up for admiration; or rather, that they are intended to warn the unguarded against knavery? Let us hope and believe that the latter is the case. Be that, however, as it may, these tales are here recorded as fair specimens of Oriental humour.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcoots," etc.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"GET up, Tilly," he said, after a time, not unkindly, "there's no good crying over spilt milk. You've seen the last of that cousin of yours, or I am much mistaken."

She rose; but it was only to make feverish search over again in the box, in every nook and corner of the room.

He watched her rather sullenly. At last his impatience broke out. "What's the good of that?" he said. "You know well enough it isn't there."

"I know nothing, but that you are unjust and very cruel," she said, speaking with repressed fire. "I never knew you to be cruel before."

His dull imagination was a little while grasping the fact of her anger; he stared at her in silence for a moment, and then he said doggedly: "It's truth. If you don't believe me now, you can wait. You'll have to come round one of these days."

"Yes," she said with a deep, tremulous sigh, "we'll wait; but if you choose to think the worst, I don't."

"You didn't know the lad's father, that's true," he said gently, as if he were trying to make allowance for her standpoint.

"No, but I know John, and I believe in him. There are a dozen other ways in which the ring might have been lost."

"What ways?" he asked exasperatingly. "You put it in the case and tied it up in that bit of paper. I saw you do it myself.

and then you locked it up with all the other things till this morning—here," he laid his hand on the iron chest. "And at breakfast time you fetched it yourself, and gave it him. Isn't that so?"

She reluctantly admitted that it was so.

"But someone might have taken it from the box in the night." She groped about for a solution.

"That's likely!" he said scornfully, "with the box under my bed, and the key under my pillow. And do you think a thief would be willing to stop short with the ring, when he might as easily have gone off with the lot?"

All this was apparently unanswerable, but as a woman is never in the least shaken from her opinion by the most admirable reasoning in the world, it quite failed to convince Tilly. If the whole world of the law had sentenced John as thief, she would still have believed in her cousin; her liking for him which had been kindly, but perhaps of late a trifle scornful, began to glow anew; her solicitude might have made up to him for everything, had he but known it. But being of a very tender heart, she must needs be at peace with her uncle too, and with that logic that is peculiar to her sex, she contrived to convince herself that somehow, though a moment before he was unjust and cruel, he was merely the victim of a strange delusion, and ought rather to be pitied than blamed.

With this new movement of tenderness stirring in her, she went up to him and put her arms round his neck, and her head down on his shoulder. He suffered her embrace for a moment before he returned it; he had been amazed at her desertion of him; and he took her overture as a proof that she had repented and accepted his position.

But he did not use her concession to blacken John's character still further, as he might have done. Perhaps some struggling sense of shame, or some remembrance of his dead sister held him back.

"I never want to see the fellow's face again," he said to himself, as if it were a kind of relief to wipe his nephew's very existence out of his mind.

"Don't you fret, my pretty," he said to Tilly, with an amazing incomprehension of her true feeling. "I'll give you another ring, and a finer—that's easy done."

Tilly said nothing, but she wiped her eyes, and stole away to her room to make a vain search there too, emptying drawers, and tossing dresses from the wardrobe, in

the faint hope that by some magic she might be able triumphantly to clear John's character from a shadow of doubt.

The thing troubled her more than she liked to own, and she tortured herself with suggestions and conjectures. If Madame Drave had been at home, her suspicions might have had a firmer resting-place; but Madame was still in the country, and it was not to be supposed that even she could examine the latest purchases made by her boarders from a distance of a hundred miles.

To make quite sure of her absence, Tilly boldly walked into her private sitting-room next morning, but it was bare and blameless of any human presence.

Madame's secrets, if she had such, were hidden away in some safe place, and the room and the one beyond it, where the bed stood trimly made in its day coverings, lay serenely open to the cold light of the winter morning.

She had hoped that her uncle would at least not repeat his accusations, and it gave her quite a sharp pang to discover that he had already confided in Fred.

Master Fred, who had interpreted his permission to "keep company" in a very liberal spirit, appeared on the next evening, and in an odd five minutes before Tilly came into the room the old man had blurted out everything to the young one.

Fred took it lightly enough; it even seemed to amuse him. It is always easy to be amused over other people's misfortunes. He preserved a grave face when he was alone with Mr. Burton, and bewailed the loss of the ring; but when he broached the subject to Tilly he laughed aloud.

"I don't think it is a laughing matter," she said coldly, annoyed that he should know of it.

"But it's so absurd! Poor old John! Such a blundering, clumsy old fellow! He couldn't commit a theft if he tried."

Tilly was so miserable that she could hardly keep her tears back.

"I thought you would have understood," she said. "You are his cousin. You might stand up for him."

"So I did," he said wonderingly. "That is to say, I thought we were agreed that no defence was necessary."

"I think you are a very lukewarm supporter."

"I will do anything you like," he said eagerly. "I will quarrel with your uncle if you ask me, though I'd rather not. Of course it is all a mistake—but—he is old,

and do you think it is quite my part to set him right? You have only to say it and I'll go and tell him straightaway. He'll turn me out, of course," said Fred with pathos; "he'd have a perfect right to do it; but so long as I've your friendship—" he said in a melancholy voice.

"I only want the truth to be known," said Tilly with a rather haughty air. "Do you think I want you to lecture my uncle? He believes in his suspicions," she said, as if that somehow justified them. "I only ask you to help me to clear this matter up."

"You know I would do anything in the world," said Fred with conviction; but, in truth, he did not know how to approach the task she had set him. It was rather hard on Fred, for the first hint of a justification brought Mr. Burton's wrath down on him, and Tilly was cold to him because she deemed him too careless an advocate of his cousin's cause.

He looked up John at the Bank, but John was impracticable, and met his questions and his chaff with a rage that was, for him, quite colossal, and Fred went away grinning. The whole thing was to him so extravagantly absurd, that he had expected the victim also to see and be moved by the humorous aspect of the situation; but the accused was as grave as his accuser. There was humour in that too, and Fred returned from Messrs. Jones's establishment with a smile that made more than one person turn to look at him.

After that, however, there was noticeably a slight change in the angle from which Fred regarded the matter in his talks with Mr. Burton. Somehow the subject was always cropping up, though the older man, perhaps, could not have explained how this came about, and Fred's sympathy with his cousin now took such subtle forms that a brighter intelligence might have failed to recognise it.

"The screw is miserable at the Bank," he would say; "it's really enough to induce a man to put his hand in the till to keep him at a starvation wage like that."

"Aye, especially when that easy way of helping yourself is in the family already," said Mr. Burton with bitterness.

"Oh, come," said Fred genially, "that's a little bit hard on John, isn't it? Of course, there are people who believe in heredity, but it has always seemed to me a very grim sort of theory."

"Never heard of heredity, but if I know what you're driving at, it's only a new-fangled name for an old truth: 'What's

bred in the bone will out in the flesh.' If you're a thief to start with, you needn't count on your son being over honest."

"Well," said Fred, with the effect of weighing this argument, and finding a good deal in it, "I suppose he would have greater temptations, poor beggar."

This was how Fred conducted the defence in Tilly's absence; in her presence the subject was tacitly avoided. Yet it was never distant from her consciousness; and when she thought of John, it was to suffer a dumb shame on his account that ached the more, because she could do nothing to comfort him.

"Of course, sir, even supposing it were true—and it really can't be, you know, though it looks very fishy—you won't make use of it against the poor beggar? That is, if you could fix it on him. Think what ruin it would be for him and his sister if a hint of such a thing reached the authorities at the Bank."

"I won't meddle with him," said Mr. Burton, with a kind of grim disdain. "I'll let the Bank folks find him out for themselves. He's safe enough for me; you can tell him that, if you like."

Fred had no stomach for such an errand; but, in spite of his solicitude, the story spread. It reached the City man in due time, and he made a special visit to Tilly's rooms one morning when she was alone.

"Found that ring yet?" he said, when he had got over his easy greeting.

"No. How did you know it was lost?" she asked.

"Oh, I heard some of them talking of it; the Major, I daresay, or Sherrington, perhaps. They all talk. You hear everything in this house."

"So it seems," said Tilly with some bitterness. "Why, Major and Mrs. Drew only came back an hour ago, and the Sherringtons last night."

"Suspect any of the servants?" asked her visitor.

"No," said Tilly; "and, Mr. White, you mustn't either. It would displease my uncle if—if any fuss was made."

"I don't think you need suspect them," he said frankly. "They're a very decent lot as far as I see. Look here, Miss Burton," he drew out his watch, for he had to measure his words to catch a train, "why don't you employ a medium?"

"A medium?" she repeated, looking puzzled. "Why?"

"Find the ring for you. Tell you where to look for it," said he with prompt gravity.

"A spiritual detective?" she said, unable to repress a smile. There was something so odd in the contrast between her visitor's appearance and his beliefs, that she had some ado not to let the smile grow into a laugh.

A disciple of those insoluble mysteries ought, by rights, to be lean and cadaverous, and certainly to be dyspeptic. Yet the City man was fat and florid, and he had a decidedly gay taste in neck-scarves.

"Look here," he said, timing himself accurately, "I'll tell you a story." Without waiting for her consent he began. It was a story she had heard before, and it concerned the loss and the recovery of a scarf-pin through the medium of a friendly spirit called "George."

"That happened to me," he said, "and here's the identical pin:" he pointed to his throat.

Tilly listened; there was the pin that had gone through such strange adventures—had been lost one night on the sea-shore, and was found next day at the bottom of a well-packed chest of books, that had not been opened for years. The lock and the ropes which secured it were intact; the heavy volumes were piled row upon row on the fragile trinket, yet, when it was recovered, the damp sand of the sea still clung to it.

Did she believe it? Her nerves gave a fluttering assent, but her stronger sense interfered.

"I'm afraid my uncle wouldn't like it," she said. "He would think it——" she groped about for a term of disapproval.

"Humbug!" he suggested cheerfully, "trickery and lies? It's what they all say till they try it. You've got to judge by results. If you think better of it, Miss Burton, and want a medium, I'll find one."

"Thank you," she said: he had risen and was going off in the same business-like way in which he had come, but she started up and followed him to the door.

"Is there anyone else—in this house who believes in these—manifestations?" she asked rather breathlessly.

It was a question at random, for she had more than once joined with the other boarders in an amused laughter at what seemed to them his too credulous faith.

"Madame Drave is a fellow believer, I'm told," he said with his good-natured smile, "but we don't hit it off very well, she and I, and we've not exchanged views. I daresay she would help you, though, if you cared to go in for a séance."

"Oh no, no, no," said Tilly, with such vehemence, that he carried his laughter all the way downstairs with him.

She had still to face the ordeal of the other boarders' curiosity, and she shrank from it sensitively. She had insisted that the diamonds should be removed from the house into safer keeping, and though her uncle had opposed it, he had yielded; but the story of the loss suffered nothing because the hearers were left to imagine the gift for themselves.

Mrs. Moxon began that minute investigation for which she was so justly celebrated on the very evening of her return. A notable Queen's Counsellor was lost to the world by the accident of her sex. She cross-examined Tilly with a felicity and an unsparing thoroughness that was a torture to the girl; but Tilly's wrath blazed out when she summed up without hesitation against John Temple. It was quite an inevitable conclusion on Mrs. Moxon's part, since we interpret other people's natures by what we know of our own; but Tilly was not calm enough to philosophise, and was a great deal too angry to be logical.

"What does she mean—how does she dare to judge!" she cried to her friend Honoria, who had come back to South Kensington with her temper somewhat ruffled by the asperities with which Mrs. Thompson had flavoured her hospitality. Honoria was shaking out a skirt that had suffered some detriment in travel; but she paused from pinching at the pleats to look scrutinisingly at Tilly.

"Has the other cousin been much here?" she asked irrelevantly.

Tilly gazed at her.

"Honoria," she said, "I don't believe you were listening; how would you like if Mrs. Moxon said such things of you?"

"If they were true I shouldn't like it, I daresay, but if they were false, I could bear to have her accuse me, I think. Why, is there one of us of whom she hasn't the vilest opinion? We have no Church connections, my dear; we are not even the cousins of a possible canon; we are nothing and nobodies, and, therefore, if a temptation came in our way, we should inevitably succumb to it. Tilly, you are a goose!" she ended emphatically.

Tilly went to her, ruthlessly advancing over the damaged skirt. "Honoria, you don't believe——?" she said.

"I am not a Mrs. Moxon, my dear, thank goodness!" cried Honoria, with her chin in

the air. "I can believe in a man's honesty, till his guilt is proved at the least."

Then Tilly put her arms round Honoria's neck, and said how nice it was to have her back again, and how she had missed her, and what a good thing it was there were some unsuspicious people left in the world; and, after they had hugged, and embraced, and kissed each other, and possibly cried a little, for no reason in the world, they fell with great spirit to discussing the gown, and settling the means for its repair.

But when they had said good-night, and Honoria had gone down to join the ladies in the common drawing-room, she had another word to say on the subject.

The story of the lost ring had already been minutely discussed and considered with varying degrees of interest and indifference, but that did not hinder a fresh revival of it on every opportunity.

"I'll tell you what," said Honoria, addressing the company, "if that foolish old man doesn't take care, he'll drive Tilly into love with the other cousin, the wrong one. Make a man a martyr, and you make him into a hero at once."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Drew, who believed in John's innocence, and had heard of his plight with concern. "I don't know that it would be so very far wrong. I like what I have seen of the other one, Honoria."

"Oh," said Honoria, with that air of innocence she sometimes wore in giving a sharp retort. "You like everybody, and Mrs. Moxon here likes nobody. I am the only moderate person; I content myself with liking the people who like me."

"Then you wouldn't favour either suitor in that case," said Mrs. Moxon, with a ladylike desire to be revenged.

"It's for Tilly to choose," Honoria said. "After all, her decision is a little more important than mine."

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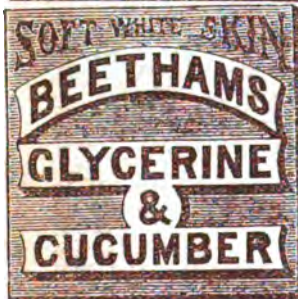
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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 984. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXV.

FRED TEMPLE found an unexpected visitor one day awaiting him when he went home to those comfortable rooms of his in St. James's Street, that were the envy of his fellow-labourers in the Patent Office.

He had a pretty taste, and the fashion of the time for nicknacks and frippery gave him scope to use it. He had made his rooms very pleasant and cosy, at any rate, and his friends liked to gather there to smoke and lounge in the easy chairs, and discuss the last theatrical siren that had enthralled them. Whence did all this shining prosperity come? Not from the Patent Office, that was certain. Government is a stern parent and would have its children live in Spartan fashion. It was generally believed that Fred was happy in the possession of private means; but, even if it was now and again whispered that he was dipped rather deep, and had engaged in certain transactions about which he did not greatly wish the Doctor at home to hear, he was voted a good fellow all the same, and his visitors smoked his cigars and drank his wine without scruple.

It was the Doctor whom Fred found seated in one of his easiest chairs and surveying his arrangements through a gold-rimmed eye-glass. Fred did not love surprises any more than the rest of us; but he came forward with as fair a show of cordiality as he could muster.

"Well, you didn't expect me, eh?" said the Doctor, giving him a white hand to shake. "If you had known of my coming

you would have stripped off half the finery and ordered a bottle of ale and a crust of bread and cheese from the tavern round the corner. You've a pretty taste in wine, my son, I must say. Let me congratulate you on it."

"I'm glad you appreciate it, sir," said Fred, glancing at the decanter and the empty glass at his father's elbow; "but you must not imagine that this is an everyday vintage. I had one or two friends last night whom I—I—"

"Whom you wished to honour," supplied the Doctor blandly. "I am fortunate in coming to-day. For yourself the small beer is all you desire, no doubt."

"We all like the best we can get, I suppose," he said laughingly, as he drew a chair to the table and sat down.

He had anticipated rather a bad time of it on seeing his father, and was surprised and grateful to find him in a genial—even a jocose—mood. Perhaps some whisper of Fred's fine prospects had reached the Doctor, who was like other parents in wishing and expecting much for his son.

Seen thus together, they had not much likeness to each other; Fred, no doubt, followed the traditions of his mother's family, for he was tall and slim, while the Doctor on the other hand was short and plump. His dress was strictly professional in its cut and colour, and he wore a wig in which the grey was decorously interspersed with the original reddish-brown shade of his own locks; and, though he was smiling now, you could guess very accurately with what a solemn blandness he would feel your pulse and examine your tongue. Family practitioner was, in short, writ large upon him, and he was pleased to have it so. Perhaps Fred did not like it quite so well, and would have preferred a

county magnate for a father. There was Malleson, for instance, whose uncle was a Baron and the worst-dressed man in London, and yet Fred would willingly have exchanged his ill-fitting tweeds for the smug neatness with which his father's person was adorned.

Possibly the Doctor guessed something of this too, for he said:

"Well, and what are you going to do to amuse an old country fellow for a night?"

"What would you like best to do?" Fred asked dutifully. "I've nothing to do; that is, I was going to dine with Malleson and one or two other men, but I'll drop a line and say I can't come."

"You must not do that on my account," said the Doctor magnanimously. "Your host's uncle will, no doubt be one of the party, and it is well for you to keep up a good connection. If you could have let your friend know that I was here—he—ah—might have extended the invitation to me. I have had the honor of meeting the Baron at Sir Augustus Page's."

"Oh, he won't be there," Fred hastened to say, hiding his amusement at this simplicity. "I really don't think that you'd care about it. It's only one or two young fellows. We dine at the club, and take a hand at whist after. It's all right; Malleson won't mind."

"Very well, my boy," said the Doctor, secretly pleased that his son should be on such easy terms with a sprig of the aristocracy; "you shall do with me as you please. I found I could spare a couple of days, and so I thought I'd run up and take a look at you. We medical men, my dear boy, don't know what it is to have a holiday once in five years." Fred murmured something which might pass for sympathy; but in truth, if the practitioner had had many holidays, it might have been awkward for his son.

"I thought you might have had business," said Fred, feeling very glad that the business did not concern him. "Since it is pleasure, we must make the most of it."

"I came to see you," repeated the other. "Sir Augustus and his lady are in town for Christmas, and I must pay my respects there, but otherwise I am at leisure."

Fred settled with the best grace he could that they should dine at the Criterion or the Holborn, and go to a theatre afterwards.

"And I could take you to Mrs. Popham's, if you like," he added with an effort; "this

is her open night, and I can take anybody I choose."

But the Doctor decided against Mrs. Popham's.

"I'm an old man," he said, though he would not have liked anyone else to say this of him. "I can't afford to take my pleasures as lavishly as you young men. We'll have a bit of dinner and go to the theatre, and then you shall go to your friend's alone. You can give me a corner to sleep in."

"There's my room," said Fred, inwardly grateful for this concession, "I can turn in on the sofa for a couple of hours when I get home."

"Very bad, very bad, this turning of night into day," said the Doctor, shaking his head; "but we preach in vain; the upper world of London makes its own laws."

"And very pleasant ones too," cried Fred. "Here am I an illustration of their working. You wouldn't say that they affect me seriously? It's all right if you are used to it."

"I should say that you look remarkably well, my son." They were by this time seated at a snug little table at a restaurant, where a band discoursed gay music to the diners. "I should say," the elder man went on deliberately, "that you look as if Fortune were smiling on you."

Fred looked down rather consciously at his plate.

"Has anyone been carrying tales of me to the country?" he asked.

"Oh, we hear things there sometimes; a little bird brings us scraps of intelligence sometimes," said the Doctor genially. "And so the millionaire has come back, has he, with his millions to spend? Bless me! Bob Burton a millionaire—Burton who began the world with the proverbial half-crown—literally with a beggarly shilling or two in his pocket!" He paused a while to entertain his amazement.

"That's the easiest bit of it," said Fred, with a laugh; "anybody can do it, as Mark Twain remarks; but it isn't everybody who can convert the two-and-sixpence into a big pile."

"I shouldn't have said that Burton was the man to do it," said the Doctor musingly.

"Neither is he. Good luck did it for him. He's an astounding instance of the perversity of Fortune. You'd have said that he was the last man she would favour; yet she has heaped her honours on him."

"Well," said the Doctor gaily, "the fact remains; rumour hasn't belied us in that particular, and, if it has spoken truth in another, I for one will be well satisfied."

"In what other?" asked Fred, with a fine assumption of innocence.

"Come, come, Master Fred! Must I tell you all the nonsense I've been hearing about you and the young lady who shall be nameless, but who, if all I hear is true, is not averse from a certain young gentleman? You want me to repeat it, do you? And you pretend innocence all the while, you sly young dog!" cried the Doctor, growing facetious. "Well, well; I can wait. I can wait till you choose to confess."

"Upon my word, there is nothing to confess," said Fred; but he twirled his moustache and smiled in a manner that belied his words; "except that the lady you speak of is the most charming in the world, and that I am her humble servant and slave, as everybody else is who knows her."

"Well, well, well," said the Doctor, tapping his bosom in a way he had with his gold-rimmed eye-glass; "and what says the uncle to your adoration?"

"He's good enough to look on me with favour," said Fred with a grin. "It's all straight in that quarter; but his consent isn't enough, and I've no right—none in the world—to count on hers as yet."

"All in good time," said the Doctor lightly; but he looked at his son keenly, as if he were making a diagnosis of an intricate case. Fred came off very well from such a scrutiny. He was abundantly good-looking, and he had the gay and conquering air which is supposed to be irresistible to women. There was no reason why he should not succeed; there was, on the contrary, every ground for the highest hopes.

The Doctor was in such a good humour that he cheerfully paid the dinner-bill—though Fred was supposed to be the entertainer—and he insisted on franking his boy at the play. It is the successful to whom all the good things come, and Fred had never before found a parental visit so agreeable.

"By Jove! if it hadn't been for this stroke of luck there would have been a nice shindy!" said the young man to himself, as he thought of all the complications from which his marriage with Tilly was to set him free. But he never gave long entertainment to dismal thoughts, and he

parted with his father at the theatre door and hurried off to Mrs. Popham's, where he knew he should meet her.

Tilly had been unable to persuade her uncle to go with her; but she had easily enough found a chaperon; and, in the new trouble which had befallen her, when her uncle seemed alienated and her cousin lost to her, it was a relief to go out into a gay world and forget.

She had just ceased from dancing when Fred got into the crowded drawing-room, and he was able to make his way up to her. She would not dance again; it was late, and she was about to go home; but he entreated a moment or two of grace.

She yielded and listened, while he eagerly explained how it was that he had not been able to come earlier. She was glad to see him; perhaps she had even missed him, being used to his devotion; but that was all. She had not longed for his arrival, and had not met him with a quicker heart-beat; the moment had not yet come in which she could say to herself that it was sweet to love and to be loved. He played a large part in her life, but he was not necessary to it, and, in the medley of emotions and feelings through which she was passing, the great passion had no place. She vaguely felt its absence, and wistfully tried to make up to Fred for what might be her coldness in the future by a greater measure of kindness in the present.

"The Doctor descended upon me," Fred was saying, "and, as I am a very dutiful son, I had to minister to his amusement, and to forego my own."

"If you are so dutiful, it ought to have been a pleasure to you," said Tilly with feigned severity. "Did he come to town on purpose to see you?"

"And to buy pills, and plasters, and lotions, no doubt," said Fred with a shrug. "We don't go into that; the Doctor knows that I have no turn for the details of his profession, and the wisest thing he ever did was to keep me out of it."

"You would make a very bad doctor," she said, shaking her bright head with conviction. "You are too——"

"Sensitive?" he suggested with a smile.

"Lazy," she retorted; "you wouldn't like to be called up in the night, and to ride miles in the cold and wet, and to go very often without your dinner. You prefer ease and idleness."

"I'm a poor, hard-working Civil servant," protested he. "I waste my youth over the dreams of monomaniacs. If ever I have

longed for more leisure, it is that I might spend it in your company."

But Tilly was always severe in repressing little speeches of this kind.

"We are Scotch, you will please remember," she said. "You may come to-morrow night, and discuss Perpetual Motion; you haven't made it in the least clear to me what it means."

"I'd rather illustrate it by a waltz," said Fred. "No, don't go yet. Your chaperon isn't ready for you; she is gossiping with those other old women on the latest scandal. It's cruel to tear her away."

But she would not linger; and, when he had seen her to the carriage, he felt no temptation to return to the hot, lighted rooms above. She was his one attraction there: in her grace and beauty; in her brightness; in the very lightness with which she withdrew from his advances, there was for him a charm which grew in potency. A certain nameless wistfulness which bordered upon sadness in her look that night gave her a new grace in his eyes; she was very fair to see, and she was full of a simple goodness before which—when he thought of it—he shrank abashed.

When a man begins to reverence a woman for that purity which he has sullied in himself, he first begins truly to love her. In his degree Fred loved her honestly, but he knew with some bitterness of soul that, but for her uncle's ducats, he would never have married her. Was he selfish and worldly, or was he only wise and prudent above his years?

The Doctor would have held to the last view of his son's conduct, and had, indeed, preached prudence all along; and, having himself married a dowerless wife, he was the better able to give point to his precepts.

"You need count on nothing from me," he had early said to his son. "I've given you the tools, and you must carve out your fortune for yourself."

Fred knew of no other way which would accomplish this, at once so easily and pleasantly, than marrying a rich wife.

When father and son met at breakfast, the Doctor's delightful geniality was found to be maintained at the level of the night before. He was even more gay, more bland, for he had slumbered peacefully in Fred's comfortable bed, while the latter had snatched but an hour or two of uneasy sleep upon the sofa.

"You look pale, my son," he said. "Ah, those late hours, those late hours! But when bright eyes command——"

"I'm all right," said Fred rather shortly. "Yes, Mrs. Popham manages to make her dances go off even in the dead season. I'm afraid I can't see much of you to-day," he continued, changing the subject precipitately; "I must be off. They keep us at the grindstone at the office."

"Oh, I shall manage," said the Doctor, putting up a white, plump hand and stroking his chin. He looked at Fred through narrowed lids. "I have business too, but, if I can secure a spare half-hour, I think I must leave a card on Burton. It would be only civil. He is a—a family connection—and I knew him in the old days."

In the old days, perhaps, the worthy practitioner would not have been so ready to assert the family tie; but do we not all love the successful?

"You can give me the name of his club?"

"He hasn't got the length of a club yet," said Fred with a grin. "He's studying society in a boarding-house, and fortunately he doesn't seem to care about enlarging his experiences."

There is a certain recognised amount of humbug which is universally practised, and without which, possibly, the social wheels would creak too painfully. Fred's little pretence of hard work deceived nobody, least of all the bland gentleman seated opposite him; as for Fred, he had insight enough to perceive that his father had run up from the country on purpose to make the visit which he was thus gravely arranging to squeeze into a moment of leisure. There was no question of visiting the much nearer kindred at Fulham; but then John and his sister were not of the lucky of the earth.

Perhaps some faint compunction stirred the physician's conscience, for he asked as Fred got up to go to his toils:

"What of your cousin John—what is he about?"

"My cousin John is in a bit of a scrape at present," said Fred with twinkling eyes. "I think, on the whole, sir, if you've made up your mind to go and see the old man, you had better not know too much of his nephew's proceedings."

"Ah, you young men! you young men!" said the Doctor, with a sigh which succeeded but poorly in being natural—as if he were ill pleased at the cloud which hung over John, since it left but a larger share of sunlight to his own boy. He did not, at least, grieve over a misfortune which

rendered Fred's chances the stronger, nor did he propose to journey to Fulham to console or counsel the culprit there.

"I have a little business," he said, carefully flecking away the crumbs from his spotless garments; "we hard workers can't neglect business even for so pleasant a task as renewing acquaintance with an old friend. And I must pay my respects to Sir Augustus and her Ladyship at Grosvenor Place. After that, if there is a spare ten minutes—let me see—my train starts at four forty. Well, yes, I may just manage to run over to South Kensington and leave my card."

"Oh, I think you'll manage," said Fred, possibly without intended irony.

"I suppose Tilly and he must know each other some time or other," he said to himself as he walked down the street, "but I wish—I wish——"

He did not formulate his desires, but he suffered a vague discontent with himself; with the bland, smiling, neatly-dressed Doctor he had left at home; and with the world at large.

CURIOUS MUSIC.

THE love of producing or listening to musical sounds seems to be universal. Amongst even the most savage nations we find some form of musical instrument. If the sounds produced have any affinity with the shape and outward semblance of some that we have seen, the effect must indeed be excruciating. We are told by the poet that

Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend the knotted oak;

and, if we are to believe travellers' tales, a concert of Chinese instruments would certainly go far to prove the truth of the second line here quoted. But it would be most unjust to judge of the music by the shape of the instrument producing it. There is something intricate and curious in the form of the bagpipes, and yet what child of Caledonia will admit that its music is otherwise than charming? Certainly, there have been snarling critics, who have said that, where "Hieland" regiments have been engaged, the enemy have fled with a precipitation and horror which must have arisen from a fear of something far more dreadful than death; and hints have been thrown out that "the pipes" did it. We decline to allow any value to this opinion, but remember that Addison quotes a re-

markable passage from Collier's Essay on Music, which runs as follows:

"I believe it is possible to invent an instrument that shall have a quite contrary effect to those martial ones now in use: an instrument that shall sink the spirits, and shake the nerves, and curdle the blood, and inspire despair, and cowardice, and consternation, at a surprising rate. It is probable the roaring of lions, the warbling of cats and screech-owls, together with a mixture of the howling of dogs, judiciously imitated and compounded, might go a great way in this invention. Whether such anti-music as this might not be of service in a camp, I shall leave to the military men to consider."

Although we do not pretend to be, and are constantly being told that we are not, a musical nation, yet, if ability to draw music from the most unlikely sources be any test, we certainly might claim to rank as such. A few years ago, one might often see a man standing at some eligible street corner, gaining applause and cash from the crowd by eliciting lively music from a coffee-pot. Whether his music was produced by a whistle concealed in the spout, or by the modulations of his mouth, we are unable to say. The artist who used to play in London streets upon a violin made of tin we have not seen for some years; perhaps he is the same individual, who has since "discoursed most eloquent music" on a violin, the body of which consisted of an old tin, still bearing the gaudy red and blue paper covering, which tells that it once contained so many pounds of American compressed beef.

But we are at times disconcerted by still more primitive instruments. Street boys will often oblige us with a fantasia on two pieces of slate or bone, a rough imitation of the Spanish castanets which, played with superior ability, form an essential part of the performance of every troupe of negro minstrels.

You, dear reader, perhaps imagine that the only musical instrument in your house is the semi-grand upon which your wife plays so charmingly. You may remember that night last winter when you went with your wife to spend the evening with her mother, and what a weary journey it was, late at night, in a cab from Brixton to Belsize Park. But you do not remember, because you knew nothing of it, that Jane, the housemaid, had her brother, the postman, to visit her, and that the cousin of Hannah, the cook, a gentleman in "the

harmy," also dropped in "permiscus like." Neither do you know that after a good supper these loving relatives had a happy and a lively hour in dancing to the enlivening strains filtered through a comb covered with thin paper by that innocent-looking young rascal, your page boy, Bob.

In the New Road is a tavern now called, we believe, the Green Man, but formerly known as the "Farthing Pie House," which was kept by Price, the "celebrated salt-box player." We are told by Boswell, in his "Life of Johnson," that Bonnel Thornton had published a burlesque Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, adapted to "the Ancient British Music," viz.: the Salt Box, Jew's-harp, Marrow Bones and Cleavers, Hum-strum, or Hurdy-gurdy, and so on.

Dr. Johnson praised it, and quoted the following passage :

In strains more exalted the Salt Box shall join,
And clattering and battering and clapping combine;
With a rap and a tap, while the hollow side sounds,
Up and down leaps the flap, and with rattling re-
bounds.

The celebrated musician, Dr. Burney (father of Madame D'Arblay), was engaged by Smart and Newberry to set this ode to music. It was performed at Ranelagh Gardens to a very crowded audience. Beard sang the Salt Box song, which was admirably accompanied on that instrument by Brent, the dancing-master (father of Miss Brent, the celebrated singer); Skegg, on the Broomstick, as bassoon; and a remarkable performer on the Jew's-harp.

All the performers in Foote's Old Woman's Oratory were engaged for this occasion, and cleavers were cast in bell metal especially for this entertainment.

With the Jew's-harp, one note only is produced by the elastic spring or tongue, which is kept in vibration by the finger, the various sounds being produced by the inhalation and expiration of air, modulated by the mouth of the performer. It was known as early as 1619, under the name of Crembalum. In modern times there have been some remarkable performers on this instrument, who have appeared with success at public concerts in the principal cities of Europe. The most accomplished Eulenstein destroyed, we are told, all his teeth by too long a practice of this instrument.

The Hum-strum, or Hurdy-gurdy, seems to have been invented about the middle of

the seventeenth century. Pepys, in his "Diary" (the fifth of October, 1664), says :

"To the Musique-meeting at the Post-office. And thither, anon, come all the Gresham College, and a great deal of noble company; and the new instrument was brought, called the Arched Viall, where being tuned with late-strings, and played on with kees like an organ, a piece of parchment is always kept moving; and the strings, which by the kees are pressed down upon it, are grated in imitation of a bow, by the parchment; and so it is intended to resemble several vialls played on with one bow, but so basely and so harshly that it will never do."

Pepys's learned friend, Evelyn, was also present, as we find from his "Diary," under the same date :

"To our Society. There was brought a new-invented instrument of musique, being a Harpaichord with gut strings, sounding like a concert of viols, with an organ, made vocal by a wheele, and a zone of parchment that rubbed horizontally against the strings."

Many of the instruments used in the performance of Bonnel Thornton's "Ode" are now so far extinct that we have no one capable of performing on them; but the Marrowbones and Cleavers may still be occasionally met with. It was till very lately customary for newly-wedded couples to be serenaded by some butchers of the neighbourhood, who, by striking with marrow-bones upon their cleavers, each cleaver being ground down to produce a certain note, were able to produce imitations of the wedding-bells and various tunes, according to their ability. Mostly, these performers were amply satisfied with a few shillings thrown out to them for the purchase of beer; but, in the case of one band of serenaders, the proceedings were carried on in a much more dignified manner.

Persons who were married at St. George's, Hanover Square, were serenaded by what was known as "His Majesty's Royal Peal of Marrowbones and Cleavers, instituted 1719." From their receipt-book, which was carefully preserved, it appears that the donation, given by each person, was generally a sovereign, which was received on a silver plate ornamented with blue ribbon and a chaplet of flowers. The book shows that in the course of a single year they received as much as four hundred and sixteen pounds.

Sometimes the boys and idlers would

spoil the effect of the marrowbones and cleavers by following with what was known as "the Rough Music," elicited from pots and pans, drums, whistles, and, in fact, anything that could produce noise. A letter from Robin Bridegroom to the "Spectator," refers to this custom, and condemns such sounds as very improper in a wedding concert, as "seeming to insinuate that the joys of this state are short, and jars and discords soon ensue."

We find in the "Spectator" a remarkable account of some curious music, which shows at the same time the free and easy manners of those times when men of position did not think it beneath their dignity to visit and spend their time in taverns. The "Spectator" tells us: "I was the other day at a tavern, where the master of the house, talking of a certain good great man, told me he had sometimes the honour to treat him with a whistle—adding by way of parenthesis—'for you must know, gentlemen, that I whistle the best of any man in Europe.'"

"Upon desiring him to give us a sample of his art, he called for a case-knife, and applying the edge of it to his mouth, converted it into a musical instrument and entertained me with an Italian solo. Upon laying down the knife he took up a pair of clean tobacco pipes, and after having slid the smaller end of them over the table in a most melodious trill, he fetched a tune out of them, whistling to them at the same time in concert. He then sent for an old frying-pan, and, grating it upon the board, whistled to it in such a melodious manner, that you could scarce distinguish it from a bass viol. Hearing my friend that was with me hum over a tune to himself, he told him if he would sing out he would accompany his voice with a tobacco-pipe. As my friend has an agreeable bass, he chose rather to sing to the frying-pan, and indeed between them they made up a most extraordinary concert.

"Finding our landlord so great a proficient in kitchen-music, I asked him if he was master of the tongs and key. He told me that he had laid it down some years since, as a little unfashionable; but that if I pleased he would give me a lesson upon the gridiron. He then informed me that he had added two bars to the gridiron, in order to give it a greater compass of sound.

"He afterwards of his own accord fell into the imitation of several singing birds. My friend and I toasted our mistresses to

the nightingale, when all of a sudden we were surprised with the music of the thrush. He next proceeded to the skylark, mounting up by a proper scale of notes and afterwards falling to the ground with a very easy and regular descent. He then contracted his whistle to the voice of several birds of the smallest size."

The "Spectator" concludes by recommending him to his readers as one who deserves their favour, and who may afford them diversion over a bottle of wine, "which he sells at the Queen's Arms, near the end of the little piazza in Covent Garden."

It is curious to think that about a century later the satirists, essayists, and novelists of London should almost on the same spot find "diversion over a bottle of wine" in listening to the bird-like strains of Herr Von Joel.

The tongs and key may well have become unfashionable in the days of Addison, for in the time of Shakespeare they appear to have been in favour with the baser people. In "Midsummer Night's Dream," the love-sick fairy Queen Titania says to Bottom:

"What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?" He replies: "I have a reasonable good ear in music; let us have the tongs and the bones." And the folio gives the stage direction, "Musicke, Tongs, Rural Musicke."

Many other curious methods of producing musical sounds have been exhibited, amongst which may be mentioned that of Michael Boai, the chin performer, who by striking his chin in a peculiar manner caused his lips to slap together, and the sound thus produced was varied in pitch by the modulations of his mouth. There have been also many performers who have been able to imitate various instruments with their mouths alone, without any factitious aid. As we are now living in a pre-eminently inventive age, we may be justified in expecting shortly to be gratified with something that shall throw into the shade all previous examples of curious music.

SOUTH AFRICAN SKETCHES.

WAYSIDE SKETCHES.

Few things in South Africa impress a new-comer, especially one who has been accustomed to the enclosed country of England, with its regularly defined fields, plantations, and commons, more than the

unbroken vastness of the tracts through which one passes. From the waggon or cart in which you make your journey, and which will be, as it were, your home for so many days or weeks, the eye roams over wastes of undulating plains, with no tree, hedge, wall, or house to break the outline, and which trend away into the dim distance to be perhaps faintly bounded by flat-topped ranges of mountains. In the immensity of the prospect, the stillness and the absence of life, there is something oppressive.

This is especially the case on the road from Cape Town to the Transvaal, via Griqualand West. After leaving Ceres you enter upon a succession of Karroos, or treeless and waterless plateaus, each circumscribed by its distant hills. The road traverses these wastes like a mere line drawn across a sheet of cartridge-paper, and, to all intents and purposes, the country to either side of it is a desert. At rare intervals—sometimes ten, sometimes twenty miles, and sometimes at even greater distances apart—are houses, the residences of Boers. These houses are generally built near a dry watercourse, raised in the maps to the dignity of a river, and which may occasionally have a little water in it. But such occasions are always the exception. The rain-bearing clouds from the sea are generally stopped by the mountain ranges nearer to the coast on the south and east, and, in some portions of these Karroos, six or seven years have been known to pass without a shower falling.

At still greater intervals along the road are towns. You ask yourself what is the *raison d'être* of these towns. None of them seem to have any special industry. Why were they built? The soil is not fertile, there is no attractive scenery, and no timber, neither is there mineral wealth. There is only water, which, after all, may perhaps account for the mystery.

These towns generally consist of red and white houses, built of brick or plastered mud. The few streets cross each other at right angles, and are perhaps graced by a few willows. At a little distance will be the Native Location, where the black and coloured people live. To arrive at one of these towns—built in the middle of a treeless veldt, sometimes without a bush worthy of the name of tree within a hundred miles—is like calling in at a small island in mid-ocean for a few hours. Perhaps two days later you will touch at

another island—I mean town. They all present a strong family likeness, and are all surrounded by the same barren wastes.

As you go northwards—say after leaving Victoria West—game begins to appear on the plain. It must not, however, be supposed that in the more southerly districts there is an entire absence of game. Quite the contrary. Within a few miles of such centres of civilisation as Cape Town and Port Elizabeth small gazelles, genets, hares, jerboas, and deer abound; but, as a rule, they lurk in the kloofs and thickets until nightfall, when they issue forth. Here, however, there is no concealment. Herds of springbok are seen daily from the waggon. Then the sportsman, for there is sure to be a sportsman in the party, unearths a rifle from his baggage. The waggon stops. The sportsman takes a long and careful aim, and fires. You see the bullet knocking up the dust about four hundred yards off. The buck are really about six hundred yards distant, but the purity of the air in these upland plateaus causes objects to appear much nearer than they really are, and it is difficult to judge distance on a bare plain.

At the sound of the rifle the springbok bound seven or eight feet in the air, clearing at each spring some fifteen feet of ground. In this manner they make off for a few hundred yards, then they change their mode of progression to a trot, arching their necks, and lowering their noses to the ground. Then they stop, and turn to have another look. In the meantime the waggon has gone on. At a distance of perhaps half-a-mile the buck trot along, keeping up with it. Then they commence to circle ahead, approaching the road. As the road is reached, each buck clears it with a single bound, so suspicious are they of beaten tracks. Ten, twenty, or thirty of them leap it together, and then, trotting away over the veldt, they once more stop and regard the waggon inquisitively from the other side.

Fifteen or sixteen years ago, perhaps only a couple of hundred miles further on, one might chance to see a trek-bokken, or migration of springbok. All night at the outspan would be heard the grunting of bucks, and at daybreak the plain would be seen covered with a living mass of springbok, marching steadily along. For hour after hour they would continue pouring through an opening in the hills

like a flood, and disappearing over a distant ridge. There is something majestic in these countless herds of wild animals all moving in one direction without a pause. Then many men feel stirring within them instincts which have been doubtless inherited from our remote savage ancestry, and which have been disguised by civilisation, but not rooted out. They rush to gun and horse. They charge upon the flanks of the living mass, loading and firing again and again, until with the thirst of blood satiated, and the plain covered with the bodies of twenty, thirty, or forty dead and dying springbok, they return to the outspan exulting. One, or at all events two victims, would have been sufficient for food; the rest will lie there and rot, or be devoured by jackals and vultures. Such trek-bokken are now, I am told, only to be seen far north in the Transvaal or Bechuanaland. The only wonder is that, considering the number annually slaughtered, for sport, for food, and for the gratification of the instinct of destruction, there are any left to migrate even so near as that; for since the opening of the Diamond Fields, thousands upon thousands of springbok, blesbok, and black gnus have been killed; and waggon-loads of springbok venison, brought in by the Boers for sale, may frequently be seen at Du Toit's Pan and the New Rush.

At night-time you will outspan in the veldt, near some vley, or close to a Boer's house, with a dam appertaining thereto. If the latter, it does not follow that you will sleep under a roof, as Boers do not, as a rule, have spare beds. The whole family usually occupy one bed-room, and sleep in their clothes. For the casual visitor, who dislikes sleeping out of doors, there is the floor of plastered dung of the other apartment, or perchance, if it be sufficiently long, a table; but to most men a kaross or blanket on the ground out in the open air is preferable to these. (There is a strange sense of novelty in sleeping out of doors in an unknown country for the first time. There is a sense of insecurity produced by the absence of the four enclosing walls to which you have been accustomed, and by the knowledge that your present retiring-room is a plain several miles in extent. All this, however, wears off in a day or two at the most, and sleeping on the ground in your clothes and boots becomes soon to be regarded as the normal condition of things.

As darkness sets in the cranes and

herons from round about begin to collect on the vley or dam by which you have outspanned, and form long rows in the middle of the shallow water, where they may remain all night secure from the attacks of jackals and wild cats. At intervals during the night you hear them calling to one another, and sometimes all their voices are raised in a general hubbub. Either something has alarmed them, or the birds which have been on the watch are suggesting that it is time for others to relieve them of that duty. In the bright moonlight you will see them all chattering together volubly, and then, the matter in hand having been settled, all but two or three tuck their long necks under their wings and go to sleep again.

At a little distance will be the camp fire of your "boys" — Korannas, Basutos, Griquas, or Bechuanas. They are accomplished liars, and enliven the evening by startling narratives of their own achievements. Sometimes they break out in song, which usually consists of a solo, two or three bars in length, yelled at the top of the voice, and a chorus, all this in a minor key. The air is not unpleasing if somewhat monotonous.

These songs are generally about war or cattle-lifting. I remember one in particular about cattle, of which the chorus was, "E—e—e—yu—yu—yu. E—e—e—yu—yu—yu." The performers were, I believe, Zulus, and the song was accompanied with vigorous gestures. The men were squatting on their haunches round the fire, with their elbows pressed into their sides, and their forearms, with the fists clenched, held straight to the front. At the sound "E—e—e—," they drove their arms out to their full length, and at each "yu," they brought back their elbows with a thud to their sides. So much energy did they expend in this exercise that they were all streaming with perspiration, and in the firelight looked as if they had been polished. This song went on without change for an hour at least.

After crossing the Orange River at Hopetown the scenery changes slightly. At Scholtz Fontein, instead of the stunted rhinoster bush, the rolling plains are covered with grass, not with turf like an English meadow, but with grass growing in tufts and patches, coarse-looking and from one to two feet high. Clumps of camel-thorn acacias, with their broad-spreading crowns, give the plain a park-

like appearance; and hanging down from their branches are the nests of the sociable weaver-birds, built so closely together that the whole resembles one large nest covered with a single conical roof perhaps three feet in diameter. Ant-hills, about three feet high and nine feet in circumference, formed of a reddish-brown earth, stud the plain. Those deserted—and an ant-hill is always deserted when its queen dies—can easily be distinguished from those still inhabited by their rough and perforated exterior. Perchance, if you search, a wild-bee's nest, with its stock of sweet-scented honey, may be found in one of them.

On the rocky hills and knolls, baboons, which probably you will not have seen since you traversed the three mountain barriers at Baine's Kloof, Mitchell's Pass, and Hottentot's Kloof, begin to appear. On the ridges their sentinels, generally old males, distinguished by the long thick hair which falls over their shoulders, will be posted to keep a sharp look-out, while the remainder of the troop are intent upon plundering some mealie field or garden below. If you attempt to approach, one of the sentinels will utter a warning cry, and in a few minutes you will see the whole community scrambling up the rocks; mothers with their babies clinging round them, half-grown boys and girls, and adult males, all with their pouches and paws filled with their spoil. On the march they move with almost military precautions. The young males form the advanced guard, and are scattered over the ground far ahead as scouts; next comes the main body, composed of the females and young ones, while the old men bring up the rear.

The Dutch farmers complain bitterly of their depredations. Whenever a garden or field is left unguarded, they descend upon it and plunder. They are said, too, to be very destructive with sheep, seizing the lambs, and tearing open their stomachs with their teeth, so as to drink the milk they contain. In this way they will kill several in a very short time. They are sufficiently fierce, especially when wounded, and even when unmolested have been known to attack and kill men; but with modern fire-arms they are shot easily enough. From a distance of three or four hundred yards a rifle bullet may be dropped into the midst of a group. They do not at once scatter to cover. They utter loud cries, surrounding the one that has been wounded or killed, and appear

to be inquiring whence the missile has come. They search the surrounding country with their eyes until they discover the aggressor, and then, in a moment, not one is to be seen. The pitiful, half-human gestures of the wounded, especially of the females, and the pathetic endeavours of the young to arouse their dead mothers, makes the shooting of baboons but sorry sport; but the Boers have the destruction of their flocks or crops to avenge, and so are callous.

Probably you will one day stop at a farm devoted to ostrich-farming, a profitable business enough, but attended with risks peculiar to itself. Birds just hatched are worth five pounds; a half-grown one from twenty pounds to fifty pounds; and as much as one hundred and twenty pounds is sometimes paid for brooding hens. Should a wild ostrich happen to come along that way, he will carry off with him all the semi-domesticated birds, and the ostrich-farmer is ruined. The birds are plucked before they are a year old. The operation is attended with some difficulty and danger, as the kick of an ostrich will easily fracture a limb. When several have to be plucked they are penned up closely together, so that there is no room for them to spread their wings, or make that dart forward, which appears to be the necessary preliminary of a kick, and the men then go among them.

At some farms the half-grown ostriches run about round the house like domestic poultry. I remember this was the case at a farm, Du Plooi's, I think, near the Riet River. We outspanned there one morning about ten, and arranged with the people to have some breakfast. Among my fellow-travellers was a young Englishman, who, ever since we had started from Cape Town, had been making conscientious endeavours to empty his flask of "Congo" brandy between every two halting-places. It was an internecine struggle, in which it seemed probable that the flask would be the victor, for, throughout the past day or two, the man had been observed making wild clutches at imaginary flies in the air in front of his nose. He looked suspiciously at the ostriches at this place, half-doubting perhaps whether they were not mere creations of his brain, and they certainly did look ugly and ungainly creatures, for they had been plucked recently.

We went in to breakfast, which con-

assisted of the invariable tough mutton chop, fried in sheep-tail fat. I had a seat opposite the door, and my *vis-à-vis* was the young Englishman. We had only been seated a few minutes when I observed an ostrich saunter in at the door. It came up behind the young man, peered quietly over his shoulder for an instant, and then, darting its head forward, snatched a mutton chop out of his plate. I shall never forget the look of horror which came into his face, as this sudden apparition of a long, raw-looking, and snake-like neck, terminated in a pointed head with a very vicious eye, appeared over his shoulder. He uttered a loud shriek, dropped his knife and fork, and sprang to his feet. Everybody laughed as the ostrich retreated through the door, and our Bacchanalian friend sat down again; but his appetite was gone, and he was trembling all over. Just before the waggon started, I was strolling round near the house, when I saw him, at the foot of a kopje, hurling stones violently at some object on the ground. Thinking he might be going to be ill, or that he was engaged in a frantic encounter with an imaginary snake, I approached softly, and saw that he was reducing his flask to the condition of powdered glass. When he considered that the fragments were sufficiently small, he crushed them under his heel, and returned to the waggon. Henceforward he drank no more "Cango;" his fright had produced good results.

The inhabitants of these up-country farm-houses are a strange people. The Boer is neither the pious and patriotic individual of unobtrusive habits that he is asserted to be by his zealous supporters in Great Britain, nor is he the cruel and bloodthirsty destroyer of native women and children that he is depicted by his detractors. He is simply an individual, who, through force of circumstances, namely, his separation from civilising influences and his isolated life, has fallen away in some respects from civilisation. He is behind the times, that is all. He hates change and progress, and not only is satisfied to live as did his father, but firmly intends that his son shall continue to do so also. The Boer's hatred of innovation is intense. Those men who threw up their farms in the Transvaal, and, in 1875, migrated with their families to Damaraland, where the majority died, and the survivors, in the utmost destitution, had to be assisted by the British Government with

food and clothing sent by steamer to Walvisch Bay, expatriated themselves simply because President Burgers supported the scheme for the construction of a railway from Delagoa Bay to the Transvaal, and they did not want to be brought into contact with any new-fangled notions.

As are the men, so are the women. The latter can hardly be described as good-looking as a class, and their appearance is of that description which we should term "dowdy." I have, however, seen pretty Boer girls—pretty, that is, in a Dutch style of view. One, I remember, I saw when I was travelling up to the Diamond Fields in the Transport Waggon with the young Englishman whose adventure I have just narrated. Amongst the passengers was a young Adonis from the suburbs of London, who made most praiseworthy attempts to "touch up" his personal appearance whenever we stopped at a farmhouse or a town, and who even ran the risk of being considered haughty by continuing to wear a collar and necktie all through the journey, but who had looked in vain all along the road for a young damsel of attractions worthy of his high approval.

One day the conversation turned upon the personal charms of the wives and daughters of the Boers whom we had met during our upward journey. I regret to say that, as a rule, the remarks were of a disparaging nature, made all the more unrestrainedly because there did not happen to be any Dutchmen in the waggon. The ankles of the fair creatures with whom we had made a passing acquaintance were termed bulbous, their faces heavy and expressionless, and their feet elephantine. Their figures were compared with the outlines presented by well-filled coal-sacks, and their costume characterised as immodestly scanty. If the truth must be told there are many things about the up-country Boer ladies which, to the eye of one accustomed to the gorgeously-apparelled dames of European cities, appear at least odd. The charm of a well-turned, but rather plump ankle, exposed perchance by the frolics of the wanton summer breeze in the voluminous cotton skirt, is well-nigh nullified by the coating of red dust or mud which covers its otherwise unclothed beauty. No foot, besides, could look well when thrust, unstockinged, into a down-trodden and slipshod shoe; while no figure could appear to advantage when

clothed in a loose cotton gown, merely drawn in at the waist. But then allowance must be made for the necessities of the situation. Separated forty, fifty, or one hundred miles from "dry-goods" stores, the paraphernalia of female finery could only with difficulty be obtained, even if they were suitable for the surroundings and occupations of the wearers; and the extreme scarcity of water at most seasons of the year renders ablution an incident in one's life. Our suburban Adonis, however, absolutely declined to take into consideration any of these extenuating circumstances, and loudly bewailed the want of comeliness and refinement in those few ladies he had met during the journey.

"We shall stop at Riet Fontein to-night," said the guard, "and there you'll see a regular beauty."

"Humph," said Adonis disparagingly.

"A really pretty gal," continued the guard soliloquisingly.

"Bosh."

"And much superior to the or'nary run of gals."

"Skittles."

"With such eyes—sky-blue—and teeth like a Kaffir."

"Humbug."

"Been known to refuse all the best offers round about," the guard continued. "Said them chaps wasn't refined enough for her. Reserving herself for an Englishman, p'raps." Then he appealed to a passenger: "You know Lena Kruger, don't you, Grainger?"

The man thus called upon to substantiate the unknown damsel's claims to high class beauty roused himself wearily on the hard seat, and held forth. From the fragmentary sentences interspersed amongst the torrent of expletives which formed the principal portion of his speech, we gathered that the young lady was indeed a miracle of loveliness, a desert flower; but his description was rendered singularly indefinite by his complicated metaphors.

Shortly before dusk we arrived at Riet Fontein, an unpretentious house of the usual type, consisting of two rooms. The span of mules was so knocked up by the long, hot, and dusty journey of the day, that it was evident that they would require more than the usual two or three hours of rest, and the guard, after inspecting the animals, declared that we should not start till next morning. Having been sitting with our legs cramped up since

three in the morning of that day, this announcement was received with contentment, and we revelled in the prospect of being able to stretch our legs for nine or ten hours.

As we strolled towards the door of the house, a young lady appeared on the threshold, and stared at us. She was unquestionably pretty—in a bucolic way. Fine fresh complexion, bright blue eyes, straight nose, red lips, and brown hair. A thought too short and plump, perhaps. In the matter of costume she was not superior to her fellow-countrywomen.

"That's Lena," said the guard to Adonis.

The latter cocked his hat a little on one side, twirled an incipient moustache, and ogled the damsel. He was not at all a bad young fellow, only he was at the time labouring under the impression that no woman could resist his great personal attractions.

"I'll introduce you, if you like," continued the guard.

There was really no necessity for this ceremony, we had done very well without it hitherto; but Adonis acquiesced. The guard shook hands with Lena, said something to her in Dutch, at which she laughed, and then indicated the swain by a gesture. The latter gracefully removed his hat, and the young lady extended a plump and sun-burned hand. She addressed some incomprehensible remark to him in Dutch and again smiled, while he responded in, to her, equally incomprehensible English. It was difficult to carry on a conversation under such circumstances; but the young lady evidently wanted to be affable, and there was an absence of mannerism and conventionality about her which doubtless made Adonis regret that he had neglected the study of modern languages.

When she went to look after the household affairs, notably the preparation of a meal for us, Adonis was quite enthusiastic about her. She was, he said, the only pretty girl he had seen in South Africa. He inquired, too, more than once, what was the exact distance of Riet Fontein from Bult Fontein, his intended place of residence; and it appeared as if he were inwardly considering the practicability of riding or driving over from there occasionally, when he had improved his knowledge of the Dutch language. The secret of the young lady's amiability was revealed to me by Grainger. The guard, he said, had told Lena that Adonis was a

young man of wealth and influence, who had come to South Africa to seek a wife, and that he was travelling this way on purpose to see her, having heard of her charms by report. There was nothing unconventional to Boer ideas in this mode of selecting a partner for life, and the young lady no doubt felt flattered.

Perhaps, under more favourable circumstances, this budding love-affair might, when thus artfully stimulated, have ended in the usual way. During the evening Adonis endeavoured by expressive glances to make up for his unfortunate inability to converse with her; but he had not much time for practising this art. About half-past eight the Boer family retired to rest in the sleeping apartment; and of the passengers some slept in the waggon, some under it, and some on the floor of the room in which we had supped.

Next morning, soon after daybreak, we were ready to start. The Boer family was already up, and Adonis sauntered into the house to bid farewell to Miss Lena, and perhaps to make promises in pantomime of a speedy return. He did not see her inside, and was turning to come out of the door, when he ran against the guard, who was just entering.

"Just the chap I wanted to see," said the latter. "Lena's round at the back of the house, waiting to say good-bye to you. She'll expect you to kiss her—it's the custom, you know, in these parts."

Adonis moved off jauntily when the guard, suppressing a wild chuckle, seized me by the arm, and dragged me round to the back of the house, by the side opposite to that which Adonis had taken. We all three arrived behind about the same moment, and the first thing we beheld was a Batlapin woman holding a struggling sheep by the legs to prevent it breaking loose, while Lena, the pretty Lena Kruger, was cutting its throat with a butcher's knife. She looked up at Adonis, and smilingly said "good-morning" to him. But it was too much for him. He turned round sharply on his heel, his face the picture of unutterable disgust, and, without paying the least attention to the loud guffaws of the guard, climbed into the waggon and sat there stolidly till we started.

No doubt Lena must have been utterly at a loss to account for the sudden alteration of manner in a young man who had, only a few hours before, regarded her so kindly. But I have no doubt

she got over it. The Boers are not romantic, and I do not fancy that she pined much—at all events not too much, for when I returned that way some few months later, I heard that she had married the jocular guard.

"OUR BOYS" IN FRANCE.

OUR BOYS are not what they were. Miss Cobbe, in her humorous "Faith-healing and Fear-killing," complains that they are afraid of catching cold at cricket; of bathing too soon after meals; of being thrown when, not having learned to ride, they are offered a mount on a pony. Altogether she is driven to believe that the race of molly-coddles is unpleasantly on the increase. It may be so; boys certainly are more luxurious—would revolt against the Spartan bareness of bed-room and study which sufficed for their fathers. But a Frenchman, Dr. Rochard, makes the same complaint about French boys—that they are losing tone and nerve, and getting short-sighted and dyspeptic. And he proves his case, as far as the higher classes go, seeing that the French Admiralty has been obliged to waive the rule against admitting short-sighted officers into the Navy—the percentage of short-sighted boys in the Lycées having risen almost to the German level. What is the reason? "Overwork," he unhesitatingly replies. In France its mischievous action is chiefly in the higher grades; and above all in the boarding schools, in which with us the mental pressure is more than counteracted by the games that make up so large a part of public school business.

In France, public schools have not yet begun to move into the country. The big Lycées are, many of them, in quarters much like that in which Merchant Taylors' used to be. Some few have really good gymnasiums, swimming-baths—every modern aid to health. But they are the exception; most Lycées have nothing but a close little playground, in which it is a farce to talk of the boys setting seriously to games. Then, the hours are too long; "preparation" takes up three hours in the evening, besides "before breakfast." And this goes on under the eyes of a "maître répétiteur," whose duty it is to incessantly worry the boys into the more steady getting up of their tasks. No wonder there are constant rows between these poor fellows and the elder

lada. Even a French boy, with the spirit drilled out of him by years of this kind of work, gets rebellious as he grows towards the end of his course; the "maître répétiteur" is enough to exasperate the very gentlest. Of course it is the "exams." which make all this hard work inevitable. French fathers have a notion that school is the place to prepare a boy for the Civil Service or for any competition whatsoever. With us, very generally, leaving school means beginning to work in earnest; the "coach" or "grinder" does here what the staff of the Lycée is expected to accomplish among our neighbours.

"Ah, these exams!" sighs Dr. Rochard. They turn the boys into prematurely old-young men. They kill off a large percentage of the most promising of them. For it is the good boys, those anxious to do well, who suffer most. An empty-headed idler will sit through the whole preparation-time without worrying himself to learn a single line. But the good boy suffers; he tries honestly to become a living encyclopædia by the time the exam. has begun; he works at mark-getting as though it was a matter of life and death. "For that is one great fault of the system," says Dr. Rochard; "boys are set to learn too many things." The field has become so vast, that even the Admirable Crichton would have been thrown out. Division of labour, specialising, is now as necessary in education as in handicrafts. One boy must learn one thing, another another, according to what he will chiefly want by-and-by. As it is, boys are set to work too soon, they work too hard and in bad air and unhealthy surroundings; above all, they work at too many subjects.

Fancy the difference between a reaper working all day in the blazing sun, and a man sitting behind a reaping-machine with less to do than the driver of a Hansom cab. It is quite likely that the soldiers of the future, being chiefly recruited from the farm-labourer class, will be less enduring than the men who went through the Peninsula, less able to bear hardship, more easily knocked up by long marches. At least the French think so; they point out how long walks are going out of fashion, even in the country. Everybody travels by rail. Of course soldiers share the benefit, if such it is. They use the railways and not the high-roads; and they are taking to bicycles and tricycles at such a rate that marching will, before long, be confined to parade and ceremonial. Whether

these soldiers of the future will have the same endurance as those of bygone days, is doubtful. For wars fought out in Europe, it will not so much matter; for, every year the perfecting of engines of destruction makes it increasingly certain that between civilised nations a short campaign will generally decide everything. It is in countries like Afghanistan, that the hardy fellow who has worked till his muscles are like iron, and who could march across the world without getting foot-sore, will prove his superiority. To think that over-education is injuring our English labourers is impossible for one who has ever lived in the country. They are not so tolerant of hard work as were their fathers, not because they are too highly educated—for they certainly are not; but because they are not so early trained to it. By the time a tall lad has passed his Third Standard, he has got too old to grow into his work as the older race used to; he comes to it full-grown, and therefore never learns it so thoroughly as his grandfather did. And then he has, in England as in France, so few games. "Nine men's morris," whatever it was, has died out; skittles are rare; cricket is local, so is wrestling. There are thousands of English villages where the children have no play-place but the high-road. There they set up their pile of stones for wicket, and try to do something with a wooden billet, and a bit of a rail-fence; but it is poor work. As for climbing and rambling through the woods, that is never thought of except by the poachers; the woods are so closely preserved, that I know of square perches of ground, lovely forest lawns, carpeted with sweet violets, from which no blossom is ever gathered for fear of "disturbing the birds," and which I only learned the existence of by accident, and was then "warned off."

Dr. Rochard's complaint is that everything in our modern system tends to paralyse the body, and over-excite the intellect.

The eighteenth-century "encyclopædists" began the mischief by insisting on a wider course than the old Latin, with a little Euclid and the Greek rudiments; but trade and railways have a good deal to answer for. They have forced those who want to succeed to learn modern languages, and to get an insight into natural science. Gunpowder destroyed the old tournaments, and almost did away with physical training; and now exams, which have put "grand old leisure" to hopeless flight, give little time and less

inclination for fencing and fives, the two manly games which have lasted on from the Middle Ages. That, at least, is the complaint in France. We happily have got a stage further. With us, if the mischief was ever serious, the reaction has set in. Thanks partly to our Volunteer movement, partly to that love of out-door sports, which no amount of examina. has yet succeeded in killing, our "classes" do not suffer to the same extent as the French seem to do. One here and there is ruined; brain overwrought, body permanently enfeebled, and life either ended prematurely, or dragged on in weariness and debility. But such cases would crop up under any system, and are sometimes due to other causes than over-study. Our "masses" indeed are, alarmists think, getting less sturdy, thanks not to over-study, but to the condition under which their early years are passed; but with our "classes" it is probably the very reverse. The great reason for this is that we do not let gymnastics take the place of games. To the French or German lad of sixty years ago, they were a wonderful boon. He had absolutely no games except billiards and dominoes; and the young Dessauers must have been delighted when in 1786 a gymnasium, the first in Europe, was opened in their town. Soon Germany was full of gymnasia; and when the French crossed the Rhine, and most of the Princes and Princelets submitted to Napoleon, patriotism was nourished in private by "Turner" (gymnastic) societies, which became semi-military, and had for their avowed object the keeping up of that strength and agility, which were by-and-by to turn the tables on their conquerors. Gymnastics were adopted, too, by Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, and even by Spain. But France had too much to do with real soldiering, when Napoleon was swallowing army after army, to care much for anything else.

Not till 1818 did the Spanish refugee, Colonel Undeano, set up a gymnasium which included a good deal of the Pestalozzian method. It became quite the rage in Paris; but not till 1854 were gymnastics made a necessary part of school-work, and even then the law was evaded to such an extent that, in 1867, out of seventy-seven Lycées, thirteen had no gymnasium at all, while in thirty-three the arrangements were so bad as to render them almost useless. And, at best, school gymnastics are a poor substitute for games. They soon come to be looked upon as part of the

work; boys have to be driven to them, as with us little boys have to be driven to field at cricket. Then the time, too, for gymnastics is wretchedly insufficient: two hours a week, while seventy hours are devoted to head-work. That seems the great fault of the French system—long hours. Eight hours a day of brain-work are enough for a man; few can do more with impunity even for a short time. Fancy, then, working a lad of fourteen—just the very age when care is most needed—for twelve or thirteen hours, amid the gloom, and bad air, and depressing conditions of a Lycée.

Anyone who has met a party of Lycéens, marching two-and-two through a town, flanked by half-a-dozen undermasters, must have been struck with the contrast between them and the average English schoolboy. Most of the little boys look supremely wretched; the big ones seem like young men who have never been boys at all.

"That is not exercise," says Dr. Rochard; and what they get in school is not education. To educate is to transmit to the young what the old have gained, in such a way that it may be a fruitful possession. "Cramming" is just the reverse; it is wholly fruitless, for, as soon as the examination is over, most lads try to forget as fast as they can all they were forced to learn.

It is questionable whether breeding racers really improves our horses in general; to treat boys like racers is even less promising, for, when the boy has gained his appointment, he has done with examinations, and, therefore, may give up, whereas a "plater," beginning at two years old, will go on competing for years, and must, therefore, not be trained too hard at first. "Education à outrance," Dr. Rochard calls it; and he says that the mortality in boarding-schools would be excessive, as well as the percentage of short-sight, deformed spine, consumption, meningitis, etc., were it not that, as soon as a boy gets seriously ill, he is taken home.

But the schoolmasters—who, in France, eager to get each the largest number of honours, oppose any reduction of hours—say that many boys actually get stronger at school. They come delicate; they go away robust.

"True; but they are the pets," replies the doctor; "and bringing-up in a glass case is, perhaps, worse for a boy than even bad air in the dormitory, and stuffiness in the class-rooms, and damp in playground

and passages. And even of the pets very few really gain by the change.

Spinal deformity is laid to the door of "perfidious Albion." Doctors Dubrisay and Dally have just published a book on "School Hygiène," in which they cry out against "the English handwriting adopted in France for the last twenty-five years."

We slope our writing more than the French used to, and therefore French children have to sit in a cramped way. Certainly it is not our fault that French boys try to learn so many things. We have long set the example of "a modern side" in all our public schools.

In France this "bifurcation" was tried several times—in 1847; and again under the Second Empire—when it failed, though started by the omnipotent M. Duruy; and still Dr. Rochard complains that, though a little has been done, the mass of French boys in the higher schools are all going in for the same "curriculum." Singing the Doctor places among "games." He is of Mr. Gladstone's opinion, that nearly everybody can sing if he is properly taught, and that the use of one's lungs is as indispensable for health as the use of one's legs.

He believes, too, in those school walking-tours, so common in Switzerland and Germany. Who has not met in the hilly parts of the Fatherland, and at the lower Swiss levels, a troop of lads all dressed alike, with knapsacks, cross-belts, and big tin cases for botanical specimens? Given a master of the right sort, who will not insist on always "improving their minds," such a tour would be a delightful way of shortening the holidays, which are often such a terror to the elders and such a burden to the boys themselves. Here we have something to learn from Continental teachers: how to make such a tour profitable without being irksome, good for the mind as well as for the body.

In almost everything else our higher grade schools are far superior to the picture Dr. Rochard draws of those abroad. Our hours are not too long; our ventilation is better; and, above all, our boys do understand what play means. Sometimes, in an extraordinary way, our school sewers get neglected, and an attack of typhoid or scarlatina, such as rarely breaks out in a Paris Lycée, though that has houses all round it, will cause all the boys to be sent home. It is our primary schools which suffer from the same evils that in France beset the Lycées: overwork, over-long hours, and lack of healthy, invigorating play.

Monsignor Freppel, the political Bishop, made a speech in the House last January, about over-hours in Infant Schools; and French doctors say that to keep a child sitting still, except when it is actually doing some head-work, is the worst thing possible. So all the old notions about the good of children "learning to sit still," seem quite wrong. The more they move about, the more restless they are, the better. On the other hand the Germans think that our Church Service, which is more or less sitting still, is "almost as good as drilling." I heard a Professor say: "I've long wondered how you English, who are of the same blood with ourselves, can train your young people without military drill. Since I came to London I've found it out. You take them to church; there they all do the same thing at the same time. They learn joint action and obedience—discipline in fact;" and some people, no matter what French doctors say, are old-fashioned enough to think that even infants begin to do the same by sitting quietly now and then with folded hands. But how much we might improve the teaching of these infants! In our best schools it is very good; but in most it is mere dullness and wearying monotony. If I were on a Schools' Committee, I would be more careful in choosing my Infant School mistress than any of the rest. So few young women are patient, and lively, and clever enough to properly carry out one of those admirable systems for amusing the little ones; so many fewer are able to do what is better still, invent something of the same kind for themselves, and practise it day by day.

The dullness of the Infant School accounts, I think, a good deal for the coldness between parents and children, often so noticeable in country places. The mothers are out at work—field gangs, topping and tailing swedes and mangolds in the season, or stone-picking, or what not; the wee bairns see nothing of them all day. Instead, they have to sit almost as long as the French children, and in many schools with literally nothing to do; not even that pulling out woollen thread, and ranging them according to colours, and parcelling a lot of straws according to lengths, and the other simple devices of the Fröbel system. There's plenty of affection, but it gets sadly chilled by sitting so long on a form and doing nothing all day but half-an-hour's "extension movements," and a little spelling out of letters from the big sheets on the wall. I have known

Infant School mistresses who couldn't sing ; and I have known others who, with the school-room adorned with pictures of all the creatures in the ark, never attempted to say a word about the birds and beasts which a new child, at any rate, must have gazed at with inquiring wonder. I say, like Monsignor Freppel, "improve your Infant Schools." Then you won't find lads leaving for farm-work, quite content if they can painfully spell through a paragraph or two of the newspaper.

A parson friend of mine has often tried to get up a night school. No ; he cannot find above three lads who care to learn. The others tell him : "We can read and we've got the vote, and what do we want any more learning for !" If these louts had been better taught as infants ; if their awakening curiosity had been cultivated ; their early searchings after unknown truths not systematically checked ; if the main part of their early education had not been the vain endeavour to make them sit still ; they would have looked very differently at his kind attempt.

But I began with French schools. Their hours are too long, say the doctors ; and, in what answers to our public schools, they try to teach too many things, worrying the poor boys to death for the sake of doing well in the exams. Happily with us the public-school boys have altogether declined to be worried to death. Play has become the most important part of their work. We have nothing to learn from the French there ; but, in our Board Schools, where half-fed children have their poor brains overworked in the bad air of a London poor neighbourhood, and in our village schools, where too often dullness reigns supreme, and grammar is made an essential, while there is not even an attempt to teach geography, we are suffering from the same evils that Dr. Rochard cries out against. Grammar is all very well in its way. A first-rate master will teach it so as to make it a blessing to the learners. But to teach it as it is too often taught, to torture plough-boys with subject and object, epithet and predicate, is to make it an end instead of a means—that is, it is to boil your spade because some people have found a spade useful for digging up potatoes.

"What do you know about Lord Nelson, little girl !" asked a friend of mine in a village school not far from where the hero was born.

"Please, sir, we've not got into verbs ; we only do nouns and adjectives," was the reply.

We want shorter school time, perhaps ; but we want much more sorely a better employment of the time. Something ought to be done ; because the cry that "physically and morally our peasants are steadily deteriorating" comes just as loudly from those who know our English villages, as it does from French doctors.

At present, our village schools do little — of course, with many noble exceptions—except make children lose their country words and phrases, and those dialectical peculiarities so dear to the comparative philologist.

We shall not suffer as the French do. Among them the "Bacheliers ès Lettres" are so weak in constitution through overwork, that, out of every thousand, five hundred and seventy-five are rejected in the military examination ! This may well warn us to stick to our school games, to our cycling, our volunteering.

But there's another danger. Hodge has the franchise ; Hodge can turn the elections ; he is just like those Roman "proletarians" whom, during the later Republic, the great families used to bring up to the poll in small armies, bribing, cajoling, anything to gain their "sweet voices." Will it come to that in England ! Will Hodge be between the Primrose League and the Liberal Association just what Caius was between the Servilii and the Clodii ? The best way to stop the danger—and it is a real one—is to give Young Hodge such an interest in his school-work as shall make self-education interesting to him when he grows up.

RACECOURSES ABOUT LONDON.

CROYDON AND ASCOT.

As far as antiquity goes, Croydon may hold its own with any of the race-grounds of England, and even claim pre-eminence. When horse-racing came into fashion with the Stuarts, we hear first of meetings at Garterly in Yorkshire, at Croydon, and at Theobalda. But then, no doubt, the races were held on the downs near Croydon, those Banstead Downs, which stretch across from Croydon to Epsom, now mostly under cultivation. But the modern racecourse has nothing to do with the downs, and one may live for a good while in Croydon without recognising its existence.

There are many Croydons in railway nomenclature, and one may travel from station to station among villas, gardens,

nursery grounds, new streets, tramways, all with a decidedly metropolitan aspect; while still the real Croydon, the rural town and joint capital of the county, lies undiscovered. But Croydon High Street still retains its country aspect, with its inns and stable-yards, and overhanging signs, its warm and comfortable red-brick houses a little retired from the highway, its raised causeway and lines of shops.

And while metropolitan Croydon, the suburb of villas and tramlines, goes about its business, rushing for the morning trains, and marching homeward more leisurely in the evening cool, when the sweet pure air refreshes the tired citizen, and all this recking little of the races that may be on, it is quite otherwise in rural Croydon; for there we shall find stir enough among the hotels, and the stable-yards, and wherever the horsey element is in existence. The clerk of the course sits at the King's Arms; forfeits are declared; the talk is of weights, of acceptances, and scratchings; and a little enterprise, no doubt, would discover subscription rooms and local clubs in various places, where betting is going on merrily, and where the knights of the pencil match themselves against all comers.

In its way this old Croydon has an attractive look about it, with its old alms-houses and hospital, and its ancient palace, now reduced to hall and chapel. All its ancient dignity Croydon owed to its Lords, the Archbishops of Canterbury. In the old palace these prelates kept up a stately household. We read of Archbishop Courtney, who received his pall from the Papal Nuncio in high solemnity, in the great hall of the Palace. The chapel may recall the memory of Archbishop Laud, who incurred the odium of restoring the old broken crucifix in the chapel window.

Yes, Croydon was long a favourite residence of the Archbishops—is now indeed—for Addington is not far off, and a far pleasanter domicile to modern ideas than the somewhat gloomy old palace, which resembled some old college with its quadrangle, and grassy lawn, and hall, buttery, and kitchen. The old Archbishops, indeed, might have enjoyed a quiet game at bowls with brother prelates and church dignitaries, while the domestic chaplain kept the score; but there was no room for garden parties or those pleasant fêtes which combine the graces of society with a certain ecclesiastic colouring.

Croydon was always the Archbishop's; he held it in the hollow of his hand, with its church and its mill, as Domesday records, its eight acres of meadow, and wood for two hundred hogs. The sides of the downs were then doubtless shagged with woods. There is Combe Wood still left, a pleasant walk from Croydon, with a steep hill to climb, and pleasant glimpses of surrounding country on the way. But the forest then probably encompassed Croydon, joining hands with Norwood, and the hogs found their pannage where now the racecourse is to be found. The name of the hamlet close by—Woodside—tells us as much as this, and recalls the days when the charcoal-burners built their huts all about, and "Croydon clothed in black," and the colliers of Croydon were noted by the dramatists of the period. A certain kind of enterprise, indeed, has always distinguished the town. Croydon was in a sense the pioneer of railway enterprise, and a horse railway from Croydon to Wandsworth was established as early as the beginning of the present century, and at the beginning of railway development, when the South Eastern Railway stopped short at the "Bricklayers' Arms," a good way south of London Bridge, some may remember a pneumatic railway that ran alongside the iron track, and which offered an alternative way towards London.

When the St. Leger has been decided, and the Great Autumn Handicaps have been run, and when Newmarket has put up its shutters, and the great legitimate drama of the racing world is on the point of closing for the season, then Croydon comes in with its October Meeting, "under the rules of racing, and Grand National Hunt rules." Not that we have quite come to steeple-chasing yet; but a hurdle race or two thrown in gives a flavour of cross-country sport to what is otherwise a sort of appendix to the regular volume of the Racing Calendar.

It is at Clapham Junction that there is first noticeable any decided set towards the racecourse; and there we may notice a certain group of noble sportsmen who are clearly going to the races, attended by a certain number of sympathisers, who would like to go—if anybody would supply the necessary funds. These last look enviously upon the bookmakers and upon the highly finished young gentlemen who are speedily getting rid of a careful parent's gatherings. "Such as you are, once

was I," seems to say the shambling old fellow, as with the lamentable remains of a once jaunty deportment, he accosts one of these gilded youth. He does not say it, however, but lifts his hat with the utmost respect—

"You'll remember, sir, that I told you Andromeda was the right one."

"Did you, Joe?" replied the other jauntily. "I don't remember it."

Still there is sixpence or perhaps a shilling for Joe, who retires into the back-ground as the train comes up, and watches the departures with a longing, watery eye.

There is nothing in the way of a crush, and yet there is a remarkable number of people moving in our direction. That direction does not lead to any of the Croydons known in railway time-bills, but to Norwood Junction, where there is a really wonderful example of a town: a complete town with shops and streets, and a thronging population, and yet without any recognised status or designation. Here a number of cabs, waggonettes, and other vehicles are waiting, the drivers of which are clamouring for the privilege of taking us up to the course at a fixed price per head. But a long procession of pedestrians streams off towards the course. There is no occasion to ask the way; it is only "follow my leader," through lines of new streets, many of which have been built since the last year's races; rows of neat cottage-villas of the tiniest proportions, with Liliputian gardens; and ending abruptly by an old-fashioned village-green with ponds and ducks, and tumble-down cottages with big, untidy gardens. Here it is all country, and we pass through a narrow wicket, where half-crowns are pattering down in a continuous stream, into what is really a country farm-yard, with hay-stacks, and straw-stacks, barns, and stables—stables especially—with loose boxes galore, where stable-boys are giving their charges a final polish up. Something between farm-land and park-land is the wide-stretching enclosure, surrounded by a substantial hoarding, where the countryman can hardly find a crack to peep through where he may enjoy a gratuitous view of the proceedings.

The ground rises gradually to the stands and enclosures, and from this point the view is pleasant and countrified, with hardly a hint of the proximity of the all-grossing town. The soft, quiet landscape stretches under the cool autumn sky, with cleared fields in their sad-coloured

livery, with grassy slopes and fringes of tufted wood, and church spires rising here and there; the Glass Palace at Sydenham, sparkling on high; and festoons of white steam curling everywhere from innumerable trains. Here, too, are close at hand all the customary features of a race gathering, but on a quiet, unassuming scale. People do not expect to make or break themselves at Croydon Races, and the crowd has a stolid, substantial appearance, as of people who are performing a serious and yet satisfactory function.

All the brightness and colour, indeed, are in the gay silk jackets of the jockeys and the shining coats of the horses. The ladies, too, present the same autumnal sobriety of plumage, and such as are present are evidently intent on business rather than fascination. There is one severe-looking dame, in spectacles, who might pass for a professor of mathematics at a ladies' college, and she is evidently making a book upon the most scientific principles.

The touts, encouraged by the presence of such a goodly company, are more in evidence than at the larger gatherings. The indefatigable nigger vociferates more loudly than ever; the horsey-looking touts scream themselves hoarse; and, at the conclusion of every race, when the winner's number is hoisted, you hear a raucous and en-rheumed voice croaking out: "Another one of Jack Aldridge's!" Then there is the welsher, pale and struggling, hunted out of the course as he exclaims: "What have I done! Tell me what have I done!" The sellers of cards, too, seem more numerous and noisy than elsewhere, perhaps in contrast with the autumnal stillness, and in the absence of the mighty roar of voices that marks the purlieus of Epsom and Newmarket.

But in contrast to Croydon, with its quiet autumnal features, a picture of Ascot rises to the mind's eye. Here is all brightness and glow, a fever-heat of excitement; the pageantry of Royal state mingled with the brightest pomps and shows of a luxurious and pleasure-loving society. The towers of Royal Windsor shining from afar; the bright glades and noble avenues of Windsor Park; all the setting and scenery of this Royal race-ground combine to heighten the impression produced by the wide-stretching heath which embraces the emerald turf of the course, with its white turrets and stands, with the lawns bedecked with groups of the fairest and noblest in the land.

And yet, half a century ago, at the beginning of the present reign, Ascot Heath was, except at race times, still a wild and solitary region. The luxurious houses which have sprung up all around, the flowering shrubs of more than tropical brightness, the lawns and gardens and lordly pleasure-houses had not come into existence. To quote a writer in "Bailey's Magazine," in 1863: "The gorgeous-tinted tents of Tippoo Saib, pitched for the meeting, served for shelter, a canvas-covered booth was the weighing-room." The scene was of dark firs and brown heather, white posts and rails, with Windsor Forest in the distance—lonely and wild during the greater part of the year.

Ascot as a race-ground owes its origin to that historically unsavoury Duke of Cumberland who won the Battle of Culloden and earned the execration of the Scottish Highlanders. His nephew, George the Third, took up the running, and, although not much of a racing man, often patronised the races in his homely dignity. But to his son, the Prince Regent, is due the first importance of the meeting as a gathering of rank and fashion, of beauty and distinction. Such a scene of excitement would not be easy to match, even at the present day, as the twenty-eighth of June, 1791, when the Oatlands Stakes were run for, worth three thousand guineas, and were won by the Prince of Wales's "Baronet," beating Mr. Barton's "Express," and seventeen others. A hundred thousand pounds, it is said, changed hands over this event; and the Prince's career as a successful owner of race-horses seemed fairly started. But in the same year the "Escape" scandal at Newmarket occurred, when Sam Chifney, the Prince's jockey, was accused of "pulling" the Prince's horse "Escape," which the jockey had laid some heavy bets against. The Prince stuck to Chifney; right or wrong, he would not dismiss his favourite, and so he retired in dudgeon from the Turf. But he still visited his favourite Ascot, and originated the custom of the Royal procession to the course, with his team of six horses and the carriages of his suite, attended by huntmen and outriders, with the Master of the Buckhounds at the head of the cortège. The Duke of York, too, would often be of the party—that pipe-clayed, peppery, and fire-eating Duke, who at Wimbledon fought with Colonel Lennox, afterwards the Lord of Goodwood: "I desire no protection from rank

or command," wrote the chivalrous Duke. "I wear a brown coat, and—me, sir, you know where to find me."

It was when this brilliant era had passed away that George the Fourth, broken, dying, and without a friend in the world to sympathise with him, still refused to believe that his end was near, and was full of his Royal visit to the approaching races at Ascot. But when Ascot week came round, the flag was half-mast high on Windsor great tower; and any Royal cortège there might have been was of shadows and spectres not visible to the general sight. This was in 1830, and two years afterwards, when Sailor William was King, just after all the excitement attending the passing of the Reform Bill, Raikes records in his "Diary:"

"Tuesday, the nineteenth of June, 1832. The first day of Ascot Races attended by the King, Queen, etc. As soon as His Majesty presented himself in the Stand, a ruffian threw a stone at him, which hit him on the forehead, but fortunately did him no serious injury. The scoundrel was taken up and sent to prison. The poor King will now see the value of mob popularity."

The culprit, however, turned out to be a half-crazy Greenwich pensioner with a grievance, and the stone had been sent to the address of William the Sailor, and not of William the Reformer.

Victoria, too, in the early part of her reign, paid the customary attention of a visit in semi-state to Ascot. The Grand Stand and the adjacent buildings were commenced in 1839, and it was in that year that the young Queen witnessed the race for the Ascot Stakes, and afterwards sent for the winning jockey, and presented him with ten pounds.

Then there were grand doings in 1854, when our ally, the Emperor Napoleon, visited the course. Nicholas of Russia had been there before him, and had bestowed a yearly vase, which was run for as the Emperor's Cup; but that was discontinued, naturally enough, when we were hammering his forts and towns to pieces. So the French Emperor took up the matter and gave another vase, which was also run for as the Emperor's Cup, and that went on till the disasters of 1870 broke up the imperial power.

Although the Queen, since her widowhood, is no longer herself seen at Ascot, yet the Prince of Wales and the Princess make up for the blank as far as possible.

The first appearance at Ascot of the youthful pair, after their marriage, is still remembered as the greatest day on record in the annals of the course. But the present year may vie with any of its predecessors in the gallant nature of the show; in the company, reinforced by many distinguished visitors from all parts of the world, gathered together for the Queen's Jubilee; and most certainly in the quality of the horses—for, taking them all round, perhaps such a trio was never seen galloping together as Ormonde, Minting, and Bendigo, who passed the post in the order named for the Hardwicke Stakes.

From Ascot to Windsor is no very long journey in a topographical sense, but in the social and sporting scale the abyss between is very wide; else the course is pleasantly placed on the bank of silver Thames, and its position, and the approximate date of its summer meeting, are fixed in the mind of the present writer by an incident in his experience. The time was the end of June; the scene, the banks of the river by Brocas Clump, on a peaceful summer's afternoon. The Eton boys had not yet been let out for their usual rush up and down stream; there was hardly a craft afloat, and the noble outline of Windsor Castle was mirrored in the water. Suddenly round the bend appeared a wherry loaded with people in every variety of costume, except that of an aquatic character; another followed, and another; and finally a whole flotilla, every crazy old craft up and down the river having been impressed into the service, most of the passengers standing up encouraging their respective boatmen, to cut out and outstrip their rivals. And the choicest language of the bargees of old must have been prim and innocent, compared with the outpourings of the crews of that extremely black flotilla. At the same time the tow-path on the opposite side to Windsor was occupied by a long and crowded procession of foot-passengers—negro minstrels, acrobats, card and purse trick men, performing touts, and all kinds of queer customers. The sudden transition from a perfect calm and quiet to the opposite extreme of deafening rowdiness and uproar was too remarkable to be soon forgotten; but we had unwittingly come upon the termination of Windsor Races. The whole contingent were evidently of metropolitan origin, and their attendance was no doubt as unwelcome to the managers of the race meeting, as it was to Father Thames and his accustomed votaries.

It is indeed the roughs of London who are the pest of these suburban meetings, and the justification of the enclosed courses where racing can be enjoyed without danger to life or property. Egham, for example, has a pretty and convenient course, but its meetings came to an end from the difficulties attending the maintenance of order.

"CLOSER THAN A BROTHER."

By G. B. STUART.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III. A WELCOME.

It was a day at the end of March which would have done May no discredit: a sunshiny, breezy day, with a blue sky and a soft freshness in the air which told of rich earth freshly turned and close-lying violets, and other possibilities of spring. May Bulteel, sitting in the sunny window of the boudoir, had incautiously opened the casement in front of her, while the stream of yellow sunshine had reduced the fire in the grate to a heap of smouldering white ashes. She was poring over a heap of books and papers, her fingers tangled in her twists of fair hair, and scarcely would have noticed the opening of the door behind her had not the draught sent her loose sheets flying in all directions. She turned, and suddenly exclaimed:

"You should be more careful, Dennis; I had just got those papers into something like order——" Then the look in the old butler's face caused her to say hastily: "What is it? Has anything happened?"

"A gentleman to see you, Miss May," Dennis answered.

"A gentleman for me! Is it Mr. Twisden?"

"No, miss; a strange gentleman."

"Didn't he give his name?"

"No, Miss May." Dennis tried hard to speak unconcernedly; but his startled face betrayed some unusual excitement. "He asked for Mrs. or Miss Bulteel, and, when I told him that the mistress was away from home, he said he would see you, and I showed him into the library."

"Said he would see me, did he? That was condescending," cried Miss Bulteel of Bulteel, stopping for an instant before the looking-glass to straighten her hair and pull out the little bunch of violets at her collar. "Tell him to tell his business to you, as I am busy. Good gracious, Dennis,

what is it? Do say out plainly what you mean!"

"Miss May, I believe—I believe it's Mr. John from Australia."

May Bulteel stood with the handle of the library door in her hand; the gentleman who had not given his name was but twenty yards from her; but as yet he was unaware of her presence, for he was gazing up at her father's picture over the chimney-piece, and only a quarter face was turned towards her. She had time to note the tall, athletic figure; the firm, sinewy hands clasped behind the back; the short, stiff, black hair close-cropped round the sun-burnt neck and ears; the sweep of the black moustache. There were thick black eyelashes and high cheek-bones, and a short straight nose like May's own; but this was the sole point of resemblance between her and this long-lost brother—if brother he were. The girl was as fair, and round, and English-looking as the man was dark, angular, and uncommon.

She shut the door with a little bang, which made the young man turn round, as she intended it to do. He took a step or two forward, and met her in the centre of the big library.

"I am Miss Bulteel; you wanted to see me?"

May Bulteel had plenty of faults, but lack of moral courage was not among them; she looked the new-comer steadily in the face as she spoke, determined that any advances or explanations which were to come, should emanate from him, and from him unassisted. But, accustomed as she was to hold her own wherever she went, she was unprepared for the critical survey of this stranger's blue eyes, eyes which dwelt upon her face with an intent, searching expression as if they would seek out some likeness buried deep in the past or in the grave, and which were at once defiant, and yet entreating; young, and yet weary. May's own eyes were grey and wide-open. She felt them opening wider as the man gazed at her with his strange questioning look, and above her curiosity rose a sensation singularly new in Miss Bulteel's mental experience: "What is it that this man has against me?"

"So you are May, I suppose," said the visitor. "I am John Bulteel."

May put her hand down quickly upon the library table to steady herself; she had not believed till that moment that her brother still lived.

"How am I to be sure of that?" she asked in a cold voice; "the lawyer's letter to my brother received no answer."

"Because I started home immediately on receiving it."

"And you are not in the least like the brother I remember," Miss Bulteel went on as if she had not been interrupted.

"The brother you tried to forget," John Bulteel broke in, and in an instant May's unspoken question of a moment before was answered, and she knew what the man had to forgive her. "You seem to have succeeded singularly well; but perhaps you may recognise this," and with a gesture which was almost contemptuous, he turned towards her the side of his hand, on the little finger of which glittered the signet ring, which at ten years old she had thought the finest jewel in the world; the bull's head on the shields in the library windows were the same device enlarged.

A small piece of evidence of this sort often outweighs the most solid argument, especially with the feminine mind: it broke down May Bulteel's opposition in an instant by touching some hitherto forgotten chord; the next moment she was clinging to her brother's arm, sobbing out:

"Forgive me, John, forgive me! I have never forgotten you—or doubted that it was really you!"

John Bulteel gently disengaged himself from her hands and walked away to his old position on the hearth-rug.

"I can easily forgive your suspicion of me just now," he said, "it was not only natural but sensible; but it is harder to forget fifteen years of utter callousness and indifference from the sister who hung round her brother's neck at parting, and vowed never to let anything come between them, an indifference which made a passionate boy's heart turn to stone as the years went on and there came no word of remembrance. It is easier to understand it in him," jerking his hand towards the picture over the mantel-shelf; "he was a stern man who could not brook the opposition of another's will, though he had only himself to thank for the obstinacy he transmitted to his son; but in a girl, a child with a tender heart, a Christian too, I suppose, who says her prayers and goes to church on Sundays?"

"Don't, John, don't!" May broke in, her grey eyes gleaming through the tears which anger dried upon her cheeks. "You are unjust, you do not know of what you are speaking. It is true that I promised to be faithful to you; but I

was only a child of ten when you went away; and though I cherished the dearest, warmest recollections of you, it was years before I knew how to turn my love for you to account. It was on my fifteenth birthday, I remember, that I summoned up my courage to speak to papa about you; he had never showed, by word or sign, that he had another living child, and I hardly knew whether you were still alive, or whether perhaps he had had evidence of your death. Ah!" she went on, putting her hands over her eyes, "I don't like to think how utterly he repulsed me, how he bade me never again mention your name. There was nothing left but to obey him; but I loved you all the more for the silence which I was bound to keep; and after a time when papa brought Mrs. Bulteel home, she and I often talked together of how we might influence him, to think more leniently of you. I know, I know—" as John would have interrupted her, his blue eyes gleaming angrily, "you think, and perhaps you are right, that he was to blame in your quarrel; but recollect how imperious he was, how accustomed to order all before him, and you will understand a little how hard it was for him to give in, even when it dawned upon him that he was really wrong. I believe he would have owned it at the last, only death came so soon! And somehow I felt sure he would do you justice, though it might not be possible for him to tell you; you see how he has left you everything after all!"

"Scant justice!" muttered John Bulteel with a sneer. "An old place on its last legs which wants a new man's money to set it up again; an old family almost extinct which must have an heir found for it, be he ever so——"

"For shame!" Miss Bulteel cried, flaming out upon him like an enraged goddess, her whole figure quivering with rage, her hands clenched, her face white with passion. "You shall not impute such motives to my father, however much you like to vilify your own! How have you grown so cruel and bitter! You are not like the John that I used to know. I wish you had stayed in Australia, and that we had never met again, my remembrance of you was, at least, as kind and loving to your sister! Why, just now, if you had been glad to see me, and had kissed me instead of meeting me as a stranger, do you think I should ever have doubted your identity?"

"Kissed you!" repeated John Bulteel.

"But now you shall never kiss me," the

girl went on proudly, "till you can ask my forgiveness for the slights you have put upon my dead father; till then, John Bulteel, you and I will continue strangers."

And without another look or word Miss Bulteel walked out of the library.

The new master's face wore a puzzled look, as if he were searching for some lost clue in the depths of his consciousness; he walked to and fro in the room after a fashion of his own, and presently rang the bell for Dennis, to announce his ownership and to give orders for the reception of the lawyer, whom he had appointed to follow him down from town; but, when he found himself alone in the room which had been hastily prepared for him, he was still muttering between his teeth, "I should have kissed her, should I? Why, I never thought of that!"

CHAPTER IV. AT HOME.

"My dear May, who ever heard of such a thing as a girl unable to get on with her own brother?"

"There is no necessity for anyone to hear of it; but the fact remains."

"I'm sure I can't see what you find to complain of in Mr. John; he is certainly a rough diamond—not such a gentleman as your poor father; but I think him most considerate in his treatment of myself, and so willing to fall into our ways, and most easy-going about his meals!"

May Bulteel gave a sigh, by way of answer; it was no good explaining herself or giving reasons to her stepmother; the pretty, shallow little head under the "Marie Stuart" widow's cap was utterly incapable of comprehending the state of affairs between the Master of Bulteel and his sister.

Mrs. Bulteel felt she had made a point, and went on fluently:

"As to our removing to some other place and setting up house together, why, my dearest girl, how could two poor, inexperienced, unprotected women like us do such a thing? And think how odd it would look! The whole county would be up in arms at such a slight! And then our incomes—three hundred a year each—very fair allowance as long as we remain at Bulteel, as your dear father intended, but a mere pittance if it had to cover the necessities of life: food, lodging, dress, servants, travelling, charity," ended Mrs. Bulteel in crescendo, with what she considered clinching effect.

"I don't believe the Arkwrights have more to live on, if as much, and yet what a lot of good they manage to do!"

"But just look at their hats and bonnets! And, my dear May, what is suitable for the Arkwrights will not do for you or for me; and I tell you plainly, that, as long as your brother remains unmarried, or—or if other changes do not arise"—here Mrs. Bulteel bridled perceptibly, in spite of the Marie Stuart widow's cap and the wide crape folds of her skirt—"Bulteel will be my home, as your dear father meant it to be: a quiet, peaceful haven for a weary woman," continued Mrs. Bulteel in a strain which she sometimes loved to indulge, forgetful of the "changes which might arise," at which she had just hinted.

"Besides," as May said nothing, but stood twisting her fingers in an impatient fashion, and looking wistfully across the garden foreground to the stretch of Bulteel woods just breaking into April leaf, "who knows what a softening influence our presence may not have on the life of such a man as your brother? He told me that we were the first women he had even known; of course he meant ladies, for there must be diggers' wives, you know, in Australia, and all this rush of emigration, which everyone is recommending so, must have taken over a lot of governesses, and independent women. What was I saying? Oh, about women and ladies! Your brother doesn't seem to understand the difference of the terms; but I'm sure he likes to have things nice about him, and flowers on the dinner-table and all that, though he says so little. It is a woman's influence in these small things that keeps a man straight; if I had married your poor father ten years earlier, Mr. John would never have gone wrong!"

"I can quite believe that the refining influences of flowers on the dinner-table have been wanting hitherto in his life," May said sarcastically. "I never saw a man so utterly out of place in a civilised house in my life. It is incomprehensible how breeding, and early training, and family association can go so completely for nothing after a few years in Australia."

"He is rough," Mrs. Bulteel admitted; "but what a good-looking man he is! and he is very quick at picking up things, and anxious to be taught—at least I find him so. As for all out-of-door pursuits it is marvellous how he understands them. You should have seen him with 'Snow-storm' yesterday in the Park, it was as

good as a circus any day; and Bennett says the way he has picked up the management of everything in a month is quite astonishing."

"A month! It seems a year!"

"You must make it up," the widow concluded; she was a lady who believed a good deal in "making-up" of all sorts, and she spoke in a soft, conciliatory voice, as if May were about five years old. "Where are you going?" as May began hurriedly to unlock the glass door into the garden, through which she had been meditating an exit for the last ten minutes.

"Through the Home Coppice to Mark's End. I want to ask Mrs. Cooper something about the children's school attendance."

"'Au revoir' then, and don't be late, dear; recollect Arthur Twisden will be in to tea—I shall keep him to dinner if he is not obliged to hurry back, it makes a little company in these sad days; and do hold up your flounces if you're going through that damp wood—couldn't you put on your plain skirt?"

But May Bulteel was out of hearing.

"The idea!" said Mrs. Bulteel to herself, as she turned once more to the boudoir fire and her new magazine, only stopping an instant to fold her black dress back from the blaze, exhibiting thereby the tiniest of black satin shoes, and the frilliest of white, embroidered petticoats, "the idea of wanting to leave Bulteel! Why, if John were a raging lion, instead of only a lout, we should have to make the best of him, and he might be so infinitely more troublesome! I really quite like him sometimes, he is so teachable; and I can't think what May expected that she is so grievously disappointed. Perhaps Mr. Haddington would be able to advise me. I might ask him over to lunch to-morrow, as it is May's 'Art School' day."

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TILLY was not altogether surprised when the dapper and smiling Doctor appeared, on the day after Mrs. Popham's reception, at Yarrow House. She had just come home from a drive, and was seated in the darkening afternoon by the fire, having, for the moment, a whim for solitude.

He sent up his card by the maid, and, as she read it by the light of the fire, she smiled and blushed a little; and the next instant frowned away the blush. It was all very well for Fred to send his father, but if either father or son supposed—

What the Temples were thus menacingly forbidden to suppose remained unknown, for now the visitor came in, and Tilly received him with a mixture of shyness and frankness which he found charming. If he put the shyness down to a wrong cause, it was perhaps but natural, considering Fred's hopes and aspirations and his own fatherly desires.

"Finding that Mr. Burton was not at home, I ventured to think you would receive me," said the Doctor, looking with the most deferential admiration at Tilly's beauty. "Your kindness to my son gave me boldness to intrude, if only that I might offer you my grateful thanks."

Tilly smiled, unable to restrain her amusement. The speech was artificial, and so was the little fat man, so severe in his dress, so bland of aspect.

"Your son would no doubt say, and with more truth, that it is he who does us all

the kindnesses," she said. "I met him last night, and he told me of your visit."

"Ah!" said the doctor, taking the chair she offered him, "we don't see too much of each other, he and I. The country is dull, and I am but poor company for a gay young fellow who enjoys the pleasures of life; but there comes a moment when a longing to see my boy which will not be denied takes possession of me, and so—here I am."

This was not, perhaps, strictly accurate; but it sounded very well, and, what is more, he believed it for the moment himself.

"He ought to go and see you," said Tilly, who held severe views of Fred's duty in this respect. "He ought to have been with you now, when everybody who has a home goes to it."

"I could not ask such a sacrifice, since I know what attractions London has for him," said the Doctor gallantly.

This was all very well; but Tilly began to consider her visitor rather too expert. The Doctor, indeed, had made so many compliments in his day that they came glibly from his tongue. He had found them quite as useful as his prescriptions, and had dispensed them so long that he had doubtless forgotten to consider himself an arrant old humbug. To hear him, you would suppose that it was Tilly who had built up her uncle's fortune with her own little right hand, and to whom all the glory and the honour belonged. She was no specialist in the manners of men; but, perhaps, her finer taste might have been offended had she not been mightily amused by the airs of this old beau, who kissed her hand with an ancient gallantry when he took his leave.

"I leave my boy happily in such kind hands," he said. "Life is beset with

temptations"—he shook his grey wig solemnly to give weight to this platitude—"and I will confess to you, my dear young lady, that I have been uneasy about him at times. He has no mother. She was taken from me at his birth, and what is man without woman?" He paused, as if it were a conundrum to which he sought the answer in vain. "With so fair a guardian to guide and inspire him, I leave him with a contented mind, and return cheerfully to my lonely life of toil."

The last impression, perhaps, which the Doctor would have desired to make, was one of amusement, and yet it was mirth, and nothing but mirth, which he stirred in Tilly. Her vigorous young mind found a keen interest in making its fresh acquaintance with life, and she had within her a fund of humour and a perception of the comic which is a wealthier gift than we are apt to rate it, since it does much to sweeten the asperities of life, and is not incompatible with a broad tolerance.

She was still smiling, when Mrs. Moxon stopped at the door and looked in upon her.

Mrs. Moxon took exercise chiefly on the stairs and in the corridors, and poked and pried with a conscientious persistency which really deserved to be rewarded more handsomely than it was.

"You have had a visitor?" she said, looking at Tilly.

"Yes," the girl answered; "a visit from a doctor. The first visit from a medical man all to myself that I can remember."

"You are not ill?"

"No," she said, "and yet he has cured me. You can be cured without being ill," she laughed. "Yes, I think he has cured me." She laughed again.

Mrs. Moxon, who hated paradoxes, and heartily endorsed the great Chesterfield's opinion that "laughter is a low and unbecoming thing," withdrew her chill presence and disappeared.

Now, what could Tilly have meant by being cured, since, as we know, she had not given her heart to Fred? She held it yet within her own grasp, and had made no surrender to him. Perhaps it was the consciousness of a movement of generosity, of a wish to please him and to please her uncle too, which had swayed her last night and had suffered a check within the last half-hour, which made her say with such a smiling relief that the Doctor had cured her. If so, it was certainly very hard on Fred, who was not accountable

for his father's ancient airs and graces, and who followed up the parental visit in the evening.

He was fortunate in finding her still alone. An entertainment at one of the rival boarding-houses she had patronised had claimed Honoria, and, in the absence of her friend, Tilly had elected to dine in private.

"My uncle is dining in the City," she said, when Fred came in; "but Mrs. Drew will be glad to have us."

"I want no welcome but yours," said Fred, who had entertained himself on his westward way with a vision of possibilities which went to feed his hopes.

"Your father did me the honour of calling on me to-day," said Tilly, ignoring this remark.

"I knew he would come," said Fred rather gloomily. "He seemed to want to believe or to make me believe that he wouldn't have time."

"Oh, he found time. He stayed a good while—long enough to tell me a good many of your faults."

"I'll repent, if you'll promise to absolve me," he said, catching at the first words that came in his wish to keep her from moving towards the door.

"It appears, too," she said with a face which was solemn except for the dancing fun in her eyes, "that I am your guardian."

"My guardian angel."

"There was nothing said about 'angel'—and that I am to point out the path of duty to you."

"Well," said Fred with a great deal of eagerness, "I ask for nothing better. I am a wayward fellow, I know, but something might be made of me. Won't you take me, Tilly, and try?"

The words were simple and unchosen, being the expression of a real depth of feeling that could not wait to dress its phrases, and there was in his voice a ring of humility that had never sounded there before. All day long he had been thinking of her, but now, when by good fortune he found her alone, he thought only of speaking out his eager heart. He was impatient of slow circumstance which now took the shape of kindly Mrs. Drew, and again of flighty little Mrs. Popham—always of someone who stood between them; and, since at last his moment had come, he remembered nothing but the need of giving voice to his wishes.

But his words gave Tilly a shock of alarm; the light died out of her face and

left it grave. She had only been making fun in her girlish way, still with the memory of the visit strong in her consciousness, and now it all at once seemed to her that she had been cruelly luring him on.

"That's a forbidden subject," she said breathlessly.

"Not forbidden, since you promised me an answer."

"Oh, don't, don't go on," she said, "let us leave painful things for to-night."

"Is it painful for you to hear that I love you? You may make my love for you a pain to me, but I shall go on loving you all the same."

She looked at him and sighed in a helpless sort of way. A little while ago, there had been visions and dreams for her too, and images of a future which she had thought it possible she might come to accept. Now, without knowing how she came to know it, she was aware that love had not so much as stirred within her, and that all her feeling for him lay in the far-off regions of pity. If only he had not spoken again; if only he had found out without her having to tell him that it could not be.

"I don't think it's any good going on like this," she said. "Perhaps I'd better give you an answer, if you must have one."

"Wait a minute," he implored her. "May I ask you a question? I don't suppose I've any right to know, but, is there anyone else?"

"Any one else?" she said, lifting her clear eyes with a wonder in them.

"Any one whom you would find it easier to—to make happy than you do me?"

"Oh, no. I don't mind your asking that. I suppose you have a right to know. I don't know whom there could be." She seemed to search her memory. "Of course, there are the young men one meets at parties, but they seem to me all a good deal like you," she said naively. "I suppose it is living in the same way, that makes you all alike."

"I have been unfortunate in not making a stronger impression," said Fred, the angry colour mounting to his brow with this wound to his vanity.

"I didn't mean to vex you," said Tilly with compunction. "I'm afraid, now I think of it, it sounds rather rude. I only meant to prove that there wasn't anybody I liked better than you."

"Then so long as I stand an equal chance with those other fellows whom you

meet at parties, I will not give up my hope; some day, possibly, I may be happy enough to win a more distinctive place in your thoughts."

"You have that place already," she said, "and you know it. I know you far better than any of the others"—how he hated that mention of "others"—"there isn't one of them I'd dare to have up here to talk with alone. Think of Mrs. Moxon's feelings."

"Bother Mrs. Moxon!" said Fred without ceremony; "my own feelings are enough for me to manage, and you are wounding them cruelly."

"No, I am not," said Tilly; "I am telling you something which you ought to think very nice. I am telling you that I like you better than any of the other young gentlemen of my acquaintance."

"I don't want your liking; I want your love."

"Ah, now," she said, "you become immoderate."

"I want your love," he repeated; "I want it all for myself; not a mere share with others; and one day I will have it."

"That is a bold assertion," she said gravely. "We have both very likely a good many years to live yet, and the world is large, and there are a good many people in it—a great many different sorts of people, too; far more than I have seen as yet. It doesn't seem fair to the unknown sorts and conditions to be settling everything now," she said with a whimsical arching of her brows. "There might be somebody to whom it would be dreadfully unjust."

"I'm not going to give up my claims to a possible, shadowy somebody," said Fred with decision; "a mere phantom, who may never have a fleshly covering at all."

"I think you'd better take the answer now," she said. "It will be no pleasanter to-morrow, and—even if there were never anybody else—I fear it would be the same."

"No," he said, "I won't take it now, and, that I may go on hoping, will you forget all this, and suppose this visit never paid?"

"If I'm to do that," she said with a faint smile, "I think I could do it more successfully if—you went away. There is my uncle—I hear his step."

"Then I will wait a few moments," said Fred, with relief in his tone, "and my visit will be to him."

Uncle Bob came upstairs in a cheerful mood. He had dined well at a feast which celebrated the return of Behrens; he had been received with the deference due to a capitalist; he had been steeped for an hour or two in an atmosphere of money; he had seen, as in a vision, his own days of power.

It gave him an access of pleasure to find Fred with Tilly. He laid his hand with a dumb caress on the young fellow's shoulder.

"You've been cheering up my lass," he said, "that's right." He took it as a happy sign that he found them together, and their conscious looks helped his innocent delusion. He was so kind to Fred that a guilty feeling stirred in Tilly's heart, and was strengthened with every mark of confidence he displayed. He was garrulous about the dinner; he hinted at his own intentions, and once or twice he linked their names in a way that sent the blood thrilling through Fred's veins. His hopes, which had been drooping, revived once more; with so strong an ally, he must succeed.

Tilly tried to turn the tide of her uncle's talk, vainly, more than once.

"Doctor Temple was here to-day," she said; "he came to see you."

"Your father!" Uncle Bob turned to the young man.

"Yes," said Fred reluctantly. "He came up on business, and I suppose he thought——" He paused awkwardly.

"Ay," said Mr. Burton. "I mind him well in the old days——," but, apparently, the stream of his recollections was shallower than he expected, and he found nothing worthy to be fished up. "It was quite right, quite right," he went on more heartily, "you're one of the family now, my lad."

Tilly sat silent. She had thought herself free, but all the old claims were rushing back upon her—the claims which gratitude and love made sacred. She felt to the full all their imperativeness. It was but this one thing her uncle had ever desired of her; he had set his heart and built his hopes on it—why was it so hard for her to yield? She looked at Fred while she asked this, and his eyes met hers. There was pleading in them, and perhaps a shadow of reproach.

"I am going out on a special bit of business to-morrow," she said, "and I shall want a little help and advice. Do you think you could give it?"

"You know it will only give me too much pleasure to serve you," he said; going away happier than he would have been, had he left an hour earlier.

"Have you had a good time to-day?" Tilly asked her uncle, when they were alone.

He did not answer her directly.

"Look here," he said; "you never come to me for any money, now."

"Because you supplied me so liberally. See," she drew out a little open-work purse from her pocket and showed him the glitter of gold between the meshes.

"Well," he said, "don't you want to make somebody a present? That young chap, now, that's just gone, don't you want to give him a keepsake?"

"No," she said very decidedly, "I don't want to give him anything at all." Perhaps she would have made an effort, there and then, for freedom; but his disappointed face checked the words she might have uttered.

"I made a trifle in the City to-day," he went on after a pause, "and it's for you."

"How did you do that?" she asked. "Have you taken to sweeping a crossing, or do you stand and sell wonderful things for a penny? I'll come some day and surprise you."

He laughed, and drew a cheque from his pocket.

"Pretty fair for a crossing-sweeper, isn't it?" he said, enjoying her surprise as she looked at the amount. "Take it, little lass; I guess it was the thought of you that made the luck turn up so good. You can buy another ring with it. You're not likely to see the first one in a hurry."

It was an unfortunate remark; it brought back with a rush all the differences which had divided them; all the pain she had felt for her cousin; all the shame she had seemed to share in her uncle's dishonouring doubts of him. Her impulse was to withdraw the hand she had laid on his shoulder, but she kept it there; she would not even own to herself the first beginnings of an alienation from him. He was mistaken, that was all. Perhaps she had never felt so great a longing to please him as now, when she was conscious of a little effort in justifying him.

She bent over and kissed him on the rugged brow.

"I don't want any more diamonds," she said; but she added to herself, "I shall never want to wear those diamonds all my life."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

OCTOBER.

THIS was the eighth month of the old Roman year, but the tenth of the reformed calendar of Julius Cæsar, which place it still retains. From our Saxon ancestors it received the name of Wyn Month, or Wine Month, from the fact that in October wines were annually brought into Germany; they also called it Winter Fulleth. The Emperor Domitian called the month Domitianus, but on his death this was dropped, owing to the execrable character the Emperor left behind.

October has only four unlucky days, namely, the fourth, sixth, sixteenth, and twenty-fourth, a fact upon which we may congratulate ourselves. The stone to be worn in this month is the beryl, but those who are born in October are doomed to wear the opal, and share its baneful fate:

October's child is born for woe,
And life's vicissitudes must know—
But lay an opal on her breast,
And hope will lull those woes to rest.

For the cure of epilepsy, October is a favourable month. An "infallible" recipe given by an old writer for its cure is as follows: "In the month of October, a little before full moon, you pluck a twig of the elder, and cut the cane that is between two of its knees or knots in nine places, and these pieces, being bound in pieces of linen, should be with a thread so hung about the neck that they touch the spoon of the heart, or the sword-formed cartilage; and that they may stay more firmly in that place, they are to be bound thereon with a linen or silken roller, wrapped about the body till the thread break of itself. The thread being broken and the roller removed, the amulet is not at all to be touched with bare hands, but it ought to be taken hold on by some instrument and buried in a place that nobody may touch it." If this be faithfully performed, the going out of October will take away all traces of the disorder.

October comes in for a fair share of weather-lora.

A good October and a good blast
To blow the hog acorn and mast,

says one ancient saw; while another informs us that

Many haws,
Many snaws;
Many aloes,
Many cold toes.

Some further weather prognostics will be

found recorded in connection with Saint Simon and Saint Jude's Day.

The first saint's day in the calendar belongs alike to the Romish and the English Church. It is the sixth, which is devoted to the memory of good Saint Faith.

I do not know who this saint was, nor do I know why, when, or where she was canonized. This much, however, I do know, that on Saint Faith's Day our ancestors were wont to work love-charms, amongst which was the following: A cake of flour, spring water, and sugar was made by three girls, each giving an equal hand in the composition. It was then baked in a Dutch oven, the strictest silence being observed the while lest the spell should be broken, and turned thrice by each person. When it was well baked, it had to be divided into three equal portions, and each girl had to cut her share into nine pieces, drawing each piece through a wedding-ring which had been borrowed from a woman who had been married seven years. Each girl was then to eat her piece of cake (still in silence) while she was undressing, and repeat the following lines:

O good St. Faith, be kind to-night,
And bring to me my heart's delight;
Let me my future husband view,
And be my vision chaste and true.

All three had then to get into the one bed, with the ring suspended by a string to the head of the bed, and during the night they were certain to dream of their future husbands.

October the ninth is the day on which France used to run wild in celebrating their patron saint—St. Denys. This saint occupies a place in the calendars of both Churches. He was beheaded with other martyrs in the neighbourhood of Paris, at the spot at present called Montmartre (the Mountain of Martyrs), in the year 272. After decapitation, the body of Saint Denys rose upon its feet, and took its own head up in its hands as though the saint had triumphed over his persecutors. The martyr went with his head for about two miles until he met a good woman called Catula, who came out of her house. The body of Saint Denys going up to her put the head in her hand, and she placed it in its proper position on the trunk. Hereupon, Saint Denys became "as sound as a roach." The miracles wrought after the death of Saint Denys were innumerable. He appeared to Pope Stephen, who was languishing on a bed of sickness, apparently waiting for death, as the doctors had given

up all hope. The saint touched him, and he promptly recovered, and at once gained perfect health, such as he had not known before. France glories in many relics of the saint; but Ratisbonne Church, Germany, according to Baronius, contains the true body of Denys.

Pack Monday, the first Monday after the tenth of October, was at one time almost a universal fair day in England—but ceased to be observed many generations ago, except in a few instances. The manner of ushering in the fair has been preserved at Sherborne, and was done by the ringing of a bell at a very early hour, and by the young people perambulating the streets with cows' horns. Tradition asserts that this particular fair originated at the completion of the church, when the workmen held a fair in the churchyard, blowing cows' horns in their rejoicings.

Passing over an ancient British saint, Etheldreda, who was canonised by a Pope long since forgotten, for deeds no one now knows a word about, we come to a famous feast, that of St. Luke, celebrated on the eighteenth.

This is a holy day in the English and Romish Calendars, and, according to Wither, "memorises the benefit the Church received by the blessed Evangelist, St. Luke, a physician both of soul and body, and the first ecclesiastical historiographer, for he was author not only of that Gospel which beareth his name, but also of the Book called The Acts of the Apostles; and an eye-witness of most part of the which he hath written." At Charlton, on this day, there was formerly a most elaborate display of horns. The booths were decorated with them, as were also nearly all the wares offered for sale, and the title of Horn Fair was given to the event. People usually came to this fair masked: the women dressed in men's clothes, while the men wore, for the nonce, the petticoats. From first to last the fair was a scene of riot and confusion.

In all mediæval prints and pictures a horned ox is given as the symbol of the saint. Fragments of the stained glass windows of Charlton Church, dedicated to Saint Luke, which were destroyed in the times of Cromwell, give St. Luke's ox with wings on his back and goodly horns on his head.

Aubery, in his "Remains of Gentilisme and Judaism," says: "At Stoke Verdon, in the parish of Broad Chalke, Wilts, was a chapel dedicated to Saint Luke, who is

the patron saint of the horned beasts, and those who have to do with them, wherefore the keepers and foresters of the New Forest came hither, on Saint Luke's tide, with their offerings to St. Luke, that they might be fortunate with their game, the deer, and other cattle."

Drake's "Eboracum" says the fair held on Saint Luke's Day was popularly known as "Dish Fair," from the large quantity of wooden dishes offered for sale.

It was also characterized by "an odd custom of bearing a wooden ladle in a sling on two stangs about it, carried by four sturdy fellows, this being no doubt in ridicule of the meanness of the wares brought to the fair."

Saint Luke, we are told in the "History of Sign-boards," still figures as the sign of two or three public-houses in London.

A portrait of the Holy Virgin, said to have been painted by Saint Luke, is preserved in the church of Silivria, on the shores of the Sea of Marmora. The most modern village sign-painter, however, would be ashamed of the production, for a viler daub never disgraced canvas. The picture is credited with the power to work miracles at certain times.

The name of our next saint will be familiar to everyone—Saint Crispin. This festival is held on the twenty-fifth of October, and was instituted late in the fifth or early in the sixth century. Saint Crispin, the patron saint of shoemakers all over the world, was born in Rome, of good family, about 303 A.D. He, together with his brother "Crispinium," was taught the trade of shoemaking, and in after life, when engaged as missionaries in France, they maintained themselves by following the trade they had learned. They also made boots for the poor at a very low price, and a legend says they were enabled to do this because all their leather was supplied by angels. Butler tells us that these brothers were "victorious over the most inhuman judge (Rietius Varus, Governor under the Emperor Maximian Hercules) by the patience and constancy with which they bore the most cruel torments, and finished their course by the sword, about the year 287." On this day ceremonial processions used to be held by members of the shoemaking craft all over England. In Scotland, the shoemakers style themselves the "Royal Craft," and assume as their arms a leather knife surmounted by a crown, by virtue of one of the Scottish Kings having learned the craft. They formerly held such

high feast as gave rise to the following couplet :

On the twenty-fifth of October
There was never a souter sober.

Shakespeare refers to the day, in *Henry the Fifth*, where the King, riding into the English Camp before the Battle of Agincourt, is made to exclaim :

This day is called the feast of Crispian ;
He that outlives this day and comes safe home
Will stand a tiptoe when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that outlives this day, and sees old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feed his friends,
And say, "To-morrow is Saint Crispian ;"
Then will he strip his sleeves and show his scars,
And say, "These wounds I had on Crispian's Day."

It is said that Saint Simon, whose day is kept on the twenty-eighth of October, suffered martyrdom in Britain, and St. Jude, likewise kept on the same day, in Persia. Their conjoint day is to be remembered especially by those who suffer the tortures of rheumatic pain, for on this day formerly it was considered proper to put on winter clothing.

An old charm says : "On the twenty-eighth October, which is a double Saints' Day, take an apple, pare it whole ; take the paring in your right hand, and, standing in the middle of the room, repeat the following verse :

Saint Simon and Jude, on you I intrude,
By this paring I hold, to discover,
Without any delay, tell me this day,
The first letters of my own true lover ;

turn round three times, and cast the paring over your left shoulder, and it will form the first letter of your future husband's surname. But if the paring breaks into many pieces, so that no letter is discernable, you will never marry. After throwing the parings as described, take the pips of the apple, put them into spring water, and swallow them."

All Saints' Day or All Hallow E'en—October the thirty-first—is said to have been begun as a Festival of the Church by Boniface the Fourth, Pope of Rome, about the year 607, and permanently established by Gregory the Fourth, about 830, for the commemoration of All Saints and Martyrs, to whose honour no special feast day had been assigned. In 1549 the Church Reformers made a clean sweep of all the Saints that had no special claim on the sympathies of the English people, and these too were relegated to the thirty-first of October. In all probability to this fact is due the extraordinary influences that are accorded to this day. It is, how-

ever, to Scotland that we must look for anything like a perfect knowledge of the rites and ceremonies anciently and even now practised on this day. Burns, the poet, furnishes them all in his poem, *Hallowe'en*, which he explains is thought to be a night when devils and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their baneful midnight errands ; particularly those aerial people, the fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary.

In the Land o' Cakes the young people dive for apples or catch at them when stuck at one end of a hanging beam, at the other end of which is placed a candle, lighted, of course. This they have to do with their mouths only, their hands being tied behind their backs. The pastime affords much amusement, as the chance of getting a grab at the fruit is exceedingly remote, while the probability of singeing the tip of the nose is anything but distant.

In the North of Scotland it was usual on this night to drop the white of an egg into any pure liquid ; if a rural landscape appeared, the diviner's lot would be cast in the country, and he must make up his mind for a bucolic life ; if houses and steeples presented themselves, his future abode would be in great towns.

By the Welsh All Hallow E'en is called "Nos galau graf," and the credulous "go to hear and see goblins ;" but those who are not so fond of these unearthly beings remain at home to enjoy the flowing bowl and burn nuts to ascertain who shall die. The less superstitious commemorate the Eve by apple-diving, biting, and so on. The chief occupation, however, used to be the use of the puzzling jug. Out of this every person was compelled to drink. From the brim, extending to about an inch below the surface it had holes fantastically arranged so as to appear like ornamental work, and which were not perceived except by the knowing. Three projections of the size and shape of marbles were around the brim, having a hole of about the size of a pea in each. These communicated with the bottom of the jug, through the handle which was hollow, and had a small hole at the top which, with two of the holes stopped by the fingers, and the mouth applied to the one nearest the handle, enabled a person to suck the contents with ease ; but this trick was unknown to many, and consequently a stranger generally made a mistake, perhaps applying his mouth as he would to another jug, in which case the contents, generally ale, issued through the holes on

to his person to the no small diversion of the company present. In some parts of Wales it was customary on this night to dance round bonfires, then to jump through them and run off to escape the "black, short-tailed sow."

A curious rite, once generally practised by Lewis Island people, has been recorded by Mr. Martin. The inhabitants of this island had an ancient custom to sacrifice to a sea-god, called "Shony," at Hallowtide, in the following manner. The inhabitants round the island came to the church of St. Malvey, having each man his provision along with him. Every family furnished a peck of malt, which was brewed into ale. One of their number was picked out to wade into the sea up to the middle, and, carrying a cup of ale in his hand, standing still in that position, cried out with a loud voice: "Shony, I give you this cup of ale, hoping that you'll be so kind as to send us plenty of sea-ware for enriching our ground for the ensuing year." He then threw the cup of ale into the sea. This was performed at the night-time. On his return to land he and his comrades all went to church, where there was a candle burning upon the altar. Here, for some time, they stood silent, until one of the company gave a signal, whereupon the candle was put out, and immediately all of them went to the fields, where they fell a drinking their ale, and spent the remainder of the night in dancing, singing, and other amusements.

The fishermen of Orkney on All Hallow E'en sprinkle what they call fore-spoke-water on their boats, and also make the sign of the Cross on them with tar, to ensure a successful harvest of the sea during the ensuing year.

Amongst miscellaneous customs observed were the ringing of the church bells to charm away the evil spirits, which was interdicted by Archbishop Cranmer; the drinking of lamb's-wool (roasted apples thrown seething into ale or wine); the providing of a harvest festival; and other minor matters.

Prominent amongst all other customs, however, was that of lighting bonfires, which prevailed until even a recent period. This was done to ward off the mischief which it was supposed the evil spirits would inflict if not exorcised, and also to light souls out of purgatory. The custom is an undoubted remnant of Druidic rites, if not more remote even than that. When the bonfire was at its height, each member of a

family would throw a stone into the middle, and, if any of these were missing when the ashes were raked away, it was thought that great harm would happen during the year to the one who threw it in.

Some idea may be formed as to the rigour with which some of the saints' days were observed, from the fact that as late as the seventeenth century, persons were presented at the Archdeacon's Court, in Bedfordshire, for carting on St. Luke's Day, and stocking fruit trees on All Saints' Day.

The end of October in the Middle Ages witnessed the first ceremony in connection with Christmas festivities. On All Hallow E'en, the Mayor and Sheriffs of London each appointed their "Lord of Miarule," whose reign continued until the morning of the following Candlemas Day.

OLD ST. JAMES'S PALACE.

THERE is a lifting of mists, and a glow of diffused light after a shower. Smoke rises up in tall columns, and mingles with gloom above, a sombre gloom, that is yet penetrated with inner radiance. All the bushes and trees are varnished and dripping with wet, and show the russet tints of autumn picked out here and there with gold. Tall buildings, domes, and spires loom shadowlike in the distance, and, when the streets meet in some wide opening, light and darkness struggle for the mastery, and there is a kind of transfiguration scene, where men, and women, and thronging vehicles pass and repass, so many dark figures outlined in brightness.

And now against the smoky radiance rise the dusky-red turrets of an old Palace, homely and quaint, amidst the trim magnificence of club-houses and mansions. The ring of martial music fills the air as foot-guards tramp past, shaking stray sunbeams from their polished arms; the guard has just been relieved at old St. James's—that solemn military function, that charm of ordered arms; of muttered passwords; of exchange of standards and keys, which seems to guard the memories of the old Monarchy in this its ancient seat.

As the crowd which daily watches this ancient ceremony disperses, the Palace resumes its usual placid calm; grizzled veterans resume their shaving operations at upper windows; ancient Dames of Honour tend their flowers and shrubs among the battlements; the tall bearskins

pass to and fro on their monotonous sentry-go; the officers yawn over the morning papers in the guard chamber; tradesmen call for orders; the innumerable chimneys send up their columns of smoke.

Here is a restful, quiet spot in the midst of the whirl of London, waking up only at intervals, even in the full season, when the crowds of uniforms throng its antechambers, and the gentlemen-at-arms line its corridors, and beefeaters mount guard with their halberds, and the old Palace thinks itself once more among the good old days, when the Court of St. James's boarded and lodged on the premises, and gilt coaches, hoops, farthingales, wigs, and swords, thronged its courtyards.

There is something of a crowd to-day, a crowd of all sorts and conditions of women, rather than of men, although there are plenty of both, and of children, and young people as much as either; schools with their governesses, parsons with their wives and many daughters; workmen in their Sunday coats; and hosts of young women: a general gathering of Her Majesty's subjects, who have come to see the gifts which all nations have brought to the Queen in honour of her Royal Jubilee. Things as rich and rare may be seen any day at our National Museums, with no crowd and pressure to impede their examination. But there is a human interest about this show, which brings people thronging to the place; and so the people hurry under the main gateway—where the sentry stands beside his box, and the great clumsy, wooden doors hang idly on their hinges—and take their places in the long queue which is marshalled with much skill around the courtyard.

Truth to say, there is nothing of very enthralling interest about the courtyard, where the people are waiting their turn. It is called the Colour Court, and there is a vague tradition, that once upon a time a post stood in the middle, with an iron bracket, where the King's colours were deposited by the ensigns of the guard. But the most salient point about the scene is the gateway; almost the only piece of antiquity which innovations and the destruction worked by fire have left us. Originally, it was a plain, comely Tudor gate-house, as we may see it in Hollar's print; all of brickwork, with stone dressings; four octagonal turrets with a broad, low-crowned archway between; and above the arch, two storeys with chambers, and broad Tudor windows looking out. But

the tastes and requirements of succeeding centuries have a good deal modified the old gateway. Storeys have been added, floors have been squeezed together to make more room, and a bell turret over the clock has given character to the whole building. But there is one turret, the one which is nearest the waiting crowd, and which occupies the south-eastern corner of the gateway, which still retains much of its original character. There is the old doorway at the bottom, with its low-crowned, square-hooded arch, with gracious carvings in the spandrels. Then above, a plain stone course marks the original stages of the building, and justifies the correctness of Hollar's print already alluded to, and enables the mind's eye to reconstruct the ancient aspect of affairs.

Many thousands of people just at this period will have abundant leisure to contemplate this interesting relic as they wait for admission to the Palace. They will also watch the hands of the clock which bears the dates and monogram of William the Fourth, and may recall the varied history of the times between the building of the gateway of Henry the Eighth and the putting up of the dial of King William.

The original Saint James of the Palace is not—contrary to what one might expect—the favourite saint of the Stnarts, the fighting Saint James of the Seven Champions of Christendom, but a certain James the Less, a Bishop of Jerusalem, of whom, perhaps, nobody knows very much. But he gave his name to a hospital which stood near the site of the present Palace, originally intended for female lepers; and, when the curse of leprosy had ceased from the land, religious Sisters still occupied the place till it was acquired—honestly, it seems for once—by King Henry the Eighth, who pensioned off the Sisters and built a stately manor-house on the site. All round were open fields, chiefly Lammas lands, that is, open pasture after Lammas Day.

The building was probably begun after the fall of Wolsey; and Cromwell, late the secretary of the Cardinal, now Earl of Essex, had something to do with the "bigging o't." Perhaps he intended it for his own residence, for indeed the King could hardly require such a mansion so near to the Palace of Westminster. But Cromwell did not build on the same grand scale as the Cardinal had done at Hampton, and the house when completed was rarely used by the King or his immediate suc-

cessors. With the Stuarts Saint James's House was made a kind of annexe to the more extensive Palace at Whitehall.

For three years Mary de Medici—the widow of Henry the Fourth of France and the mother of Charles the First's Queen—now old and feeble, occupied the house. But the mother-in-law in the house did not answer; and the foreign household and its ways were greatly obnoxious to the populace. The old lady was sent away with a solatium of ten thousand pounds—of little value to the poor old soul, who only wanted a resting-place for her wearied bones—and being no more wanted in France than in England, the decrepit old veteran, lagging superfluous on the stage, was carried away to Cologne, and there presently died. The young Queen occupied the place as a nursery; her first boy, afterwards Charles the Second, was born there; and later on, towards the end of the Civil War, the Royal children were shut up there—the Dukes of York and Gloucester, and the Princess Elizabeth—and played hide-and-seek up and down the gloomy corridors, recking little of the fate which was so soon to overtake their father. Here, too, the unfortunate Charles slept his last sleep on earth; took leave of his youngest children—the Duke of York had escaped; partook of the Sacrament in the Chapel Royal; and then started on foot on his way to the scaffold at Whitehall.

General Monk occupied the house for a while, it is said, while the Restoration still hung in the balance; but after that event the house became Royal again, and was occupied by the Duke of York, afterwards James the Second.

At this time Saint James's ceased to be a country-house, for in the reign of Charles the Second rows of buildings began to occupy the sites of Pall Mall and Saint James's Street. Charles's lavish gifts of the Crown lands to his courtiers and favourites aided the spread of the town. Nell Gwynne built a house in Pall Mall overlooking the Park, and the magnificent Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, raised another on the site of the present Stafford House, where was then the stable-yard and Royal Mews.

But there was, as yet, no Court of Saint James's; it was the Court of Whitehall, and might have been so still, but for the destruction of the latter palace by fire in 1697; then the chief seat of the Court was removed to Saint James's, and the title became familiar in the diplomacy of

the period, and was raised to importance by Marlborough and his victories.

George the First lived there in quiet, homely style, calling for a sedan-chair when he went out at nights. He loved not England, nor the noisy, turbulent English, and was always planning to get away to the shades of his favourite Herrenhausen; but, as long as he was here, Saint James's Palace answered his purpose well enough. The popular voice, indeed, hardly termed the place a palace. It was still St. James's House, as witness the old ballad:

A woful christening late there did
In James's House befall.

King George the Second was the last of the monarchs who make a fixed residence at Saint James's Palace. It was his Queen, Caroline, who, being a stirring kind of woman, planned all sorts of improvements about the Royal parks and palaces; among others, the exclusion of the public from all the Royal enclosures. She asked of the Prime Minister what would be the cost of this last arrangement.

"Only a crown, madam," replied the politic man; and the Queen took warning, and stayed her hand.

The Palace, indeed, was more than once invaded by riotous and angry crowds, to which the purlieus of Westminster supplied ample reinforcements; and, perhaps it was his experience of this kind of demonstration which led George the Third to fix his residence at Buckingham House, when Saint James's became a mere ceremonial Palace, used only for levees and receptions. The habitable portion of the Palace was divided into sets of apartments, which, like the apartments at Hampton Court, were allotted to ladies, and others distinguished in origin, but of limited means.

And this brings us to the times of William the Fourth and his clock; not that he originated the clock, which, on its lozenge-shaped tablet, appears in views of a much earlier date; but he caused the dials to be fresh gilded, and he has left the record of the event in letters of gold. It was on this occasion, no doubt, that a little affair occurred with regard to the bell-turret that may give a certain interest to that quaint little structure.

That incident was the removal of the bell that had long given out the hours to the tradesmen of Saint James's Street. These last deplored the loss of their time-keeper, and ventured to call the King's

attention to the matter. His Majesty enquired into the matter himself, and was told that the bell had been removed because the roof was insecure.

"Insecure, is it?" said the King. "Then how is it that I see so many people on the top of it when there is any sight to be seen?"

That little question settled the matter; the bell was returned to its turret without another word; and no doubt is the same that now chimes the hours.

But ten minutes by Saint James's clock have been occupied in waiting our turn for tickets to the Royal show; and now we are ushered up that gilded staircase, which has seen so many visions of fair women and brave men, pushing and jostling each other perhaps even more than the miscellaneous crowd of to-day.

Here, indeed, we have part of the ancient framework of the Palace of the Tudor monarchs, although the efforts of the upholsterers of various periods have succeeded in disilluminating the scene to a considerable extent. Still there is the high corridor with its staircase, and the portraits of frilled and furbelowed dames, and fleshy-looking Princes of the House of Brunswick; the ante-room with its armour; and next, the tapestry chamber, the most interesting room of the series—which is, indeed, the old Presence Chamber—known in earlier times as the King's Closet. Here is a fine old Tudor chimney-piece, carved with the emblems of the period: the portcullis, the fleur-de-lys, the Tudor rose, and the initials H. A., which may stand for Henry and Anna.

We may fancy the bluff King Harry warming his broad toes at the fire, while lovely Anne Boleyn plies her needle by his side, as in the first days of their wedded happiness. The room, too, is hung with a quaint and pleasing tapestry, which was prepared for the marriage of King Charles the Second, and bears the monogram of the double C—Charles and Catherine—but, for some reason or other, the tapestry was put away and forgotten, and was only brought to light when preparations were made for the wedding of the Prince of Wales in 1795.

It was from this tapestry room, too, that the young Queen was presented to her subjects—scanty survival of a once vital ceremony—when she looked from the open windows upon Life Guards, and populace, and the Clarencieux King-at-arms, with pursuivants and heralds, who made

proclamation of Her Majesty's accession with flourishes of trumpets, amid hearty cheers, the thunders of the Park and Tower guns, and the sound of merry bells.

But these old rooms are but the lobby chambers now to the lofty, handsome, State apartments. These are big, handsome rooms of somewhat faded splendour, looking out upon the not extensive gardens, which are, however, bright and pleasant, and which enjoy such sunshine as may be stirring in these latitudes.

And now we may travel with the crowd through the closely-packed rooms, and admire how the whole world seems to have sent tribute to our Imperial Lady—including even plug tobacco and Turkish towels—gifts of all kinds, that surely rival the equipage that the Queen of Sheba brought to Solomon. And then, having passed the throne and paid imaginary homage to the imaginary presence, we are allowed to stroll calmly and quietly through a range of bare and rather dismal rooms, hung with huge battle-pieces. But there is a capital screen which ought not to be missed, containing sketches from all the associates of the Royal Institute of Water Colour Painters.

This brings us into Ambassadors' Court, where there is a well-used footway into St. James's Park.

There are now two other points of interest about the Palace: the Chapel, with a ceiling credited to Holbein; and another Chapel—the Lutheran Chapel, so called—in the very grounds of Marlborough House, where the Lutheran service was once performed for such of the Queens and Princesses as preferred that form of worship. St. James's has always been eclectic in the matter of religious ceremonies—it was no stranger to the Mass in the days of the Stuarts; and at the present day there is a bijou Greek Church within the grounds of Clarence House, the residence of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, which is within the enclosure of the old Palace.

Then there are scenes and incidents which it would be difficult to connect with any local habitation. We should seek in vain for the chamber where the unhappy bigot Mary died, or Henry Prince of Wales, or even Queen Caroline, whose death-scene, revealed to us by Lord Hervey and popularised by Thackeray, has such touches of cynic pathos in its details. But we may still find the scene of that strange tragedy in which the Duke of Cumberland was concerned, whose Italian servant attacked and

even slightly wounded his master, and then retired to his own room and cut his own throat.

Then we may conjure up little Sam Johnson standing under the old gateway with his mother, waiting for the boy to be touched by Queen Anne. And we may people Ambassadors' Court if we please with the shades of dramatic authors, and others, for there are the Lord Chamberlain's offices—a functionary who concerns himself as well with the *entrées* to the Drama as to the Court.

All is not barren, either, in the way of Royal hospitality. The officers of the guard find a daily table spread, and on gala days the gentlemen-at-arms have their banquets. The chaplains, too, had their table once upon a time, whereby hangs a trifling tale.

It was in the days of the Merry Monarch, when coin was scarce, and economists were looking round to see where a saving could be made, and the parsons not having many friends at Court, it was proposed to abolish their dinner. But Charles himself one day attracted by the fumes of his favourite joint—a leg of mutton—found his way to the chaplains' table. The usual grace was "God save the King, and bless our dinners," which the Dean of the Chapel on this occasion dexterously transposed into "God bless the King, and save our dinners;" and the King, delighted with the ready wit, swore that the dinners should be saved, and that he would himself often come and share them.

THE CORAL-GIRL OF CAPRI.

A SWEEPING storm of warm rain, a huge leaden cloud across the blue height of the sky above the Neapolitan sea, one flash of lightning—there! it was over, and the sun reigned supreme again.

And the wild giant of a wind, which had dashed the rain into the faces of travellers, went on his way through the passes of the islands and carried the hurly-burly of his thunder and lightning and rain past Amalfi, past the lovely vine-clad heights, past Salerno, down to the fever-haunted marshes of old Pæstum.

With the fresh burst of sun, the score of voyagers on board the "San Carlo" shook their besplashed selves, and threw off their macintoshes.

The storm was over, no one was washed

overboard, no leak was sprung—Madonna is good!

The "San Carlo" was sailing on bravely in the sun, keeping well out from the shore, for it was known that her passengers were all bound for the sight of the Blue Grotto, before going in to Capri town.

"Are those the boats to which we are expected to trust ourselves?" a girl asked, tying instead of untying the strings at the throat of her macintosh.

"They are," her brother answered, a boy of the age that delights in teasing.

"Those cockle-shells in such a sea as this?" Nona still questioned.

"Wait till you see them—they'll see you and me out."

"They won't see me in one, I know."

"All right."

"You are a duffer, Nona!" an elder brother said this. These three of the Morrisses were out for the day apart from the main body of father and mother and two elder sisters. All had wintered in Rome, not because any one of the party suffered from ill-health or from need of any sort whatever—Mr. Morris was simply a rich man who, for a year, had let his place in Suffolk, and who since the past October had been out of England.

Here was May. They had come down to Sorrento; they were flying hither and thither; the heat was now telling them that they must go North, or fever would be down upon them. It was the last week; the boys were always out at sea; now on this morning of occasional rain and wind, they with Nona had come out to see the Grottoes of Capri.

"Thanks," she answered to that accusation of Lewis's. "If a dislike to premature drowning makes one a duffer, then I am a duffer. I decline to go in one of those black wobbling things. I suppose the people here are half savage—primitive creatures that are 'interesting,' as Miss Youngman would say."

"Very primitive; don't they know what's what! They'll do you," Noel said.

The steamer puffed on, and the shoal of black boats came out from the shore, so void to all appearance of any caves or grotto, that Nona Morris, in her secret self, felt superior to any traveller's story of wonderment.

Matter-of-fact commonplace was the master of the hour. The black boats rocked ominously; but they were no cockle-

shells, but deep, low-lying craft, which could and would weather many a rough sea.

Pietro, a man the Morris lads had employed before, saw them, and in a volley of Italian, beyond Nona's comprehension, declared his devotion to the Signori, and his willingness to carry them into the Blue Grotto for pure love of Madonna.

"That is grand! And we will save our money. There are three of us to-day, and three is the number each boat carries."

"Three only in that great tub!" Nona cried. No one answered her.

"What a bad day's work for you, Pietro!" Lewis said with a laugh, as he went down the shaky ladder from the "San Carlo" to the "Sirena."

Pietro's eyes gleamed, and his brown handsome face was alight as if he were the very incarnation of happiness.

"Ecco!" he steadied his boat and put out his hand for Nona at the same time. "No, Signor, it is the good day, the day of all days if the Signorina sorella comes; the Signorina is generous!" His face was the picture of infinite trust and glee.

"Is the boat safe?"

"Signorina!" Pietro's arms went up as if he would invoke the whole of Olympus. Then with an air of miserable dejection, this "primitive" actor went on. "The poor 'Sirena,' since the day she was built she has never heard so cruel a word! Would she not carry the Signorina safely to—to—England—to the end of the world?"

"That's just where I thought she might be taking me;" but Nona said this under her breath to Noel.

"Where is the grotto? Round the corner?" Nona asked.

"No, no, Signorina. The Signorina sees a little black arch, a low arch on the crest of the waves; there! now we are high up we will see it well!" The "Sirena" here danced in what looked like dangerous frolic to the top of a huge swelling wave.

"That hole! We go in there?"

"Sì, sì. When I shout 'down,' then all lie down flat in there," Pietro here pointed to the deep hollow of the boat, "and, in a moment, the 'Sirena' will be like an angel, and will fly, fly into the beautiful blue water of the Grotto Azzurro."

"Then it is true?" Nona said. "And you boys have not been cramming me?"

"Vile suggestion!" Noel exclaimed.

"True as Gospel, dear."

Pietro pulled hard—one need to pull hard in that sea.

After a bit, Lewis said:

"Made your fortune since Monday, eh?"

"Signor!" deprecatingly.

"No! Then how is Carlotta?"

"Tcha!" in an angry burst, and with blazing eyes; "Carlotta is—pah!"

"That's it!—is it——?"

"Will I ever again trust a woman? No, Signor." Pietro here might have been the driest philosopher to judge by the melancholy gravity of his countenance. "Signor, what a woman loves is—gold!"

"I dare say," Lewis said. Being just twenty-three, no doubt he felt himself a competent judge. "And you have not enough of it for her. Who has?"

"It is none other than that Luigi Idyane, he, the swimmer, the man who all the signori pay well, because it is he, and he alone, who can pose like the marble, who flashes like marble and like light in the sparkling atmosphere of the Grotto!" Pietro ground his teeth. "Will I not kill him! He, to stand before me—before me, Pietro Fusco!"

"Well, I'll give not one soldo——"

"She!"—Pietro listened not—"she knows not what love is! Does she know the heart of Pietro? No. Does she know the heart of that vile Idyane—a stone! Pah!"

Here all his energy was given to his oars, and literally the "Sirena" flew.

"Look out!"

Noel gave a quick warning, and slipped off his seat.

"Down!" roared Pietro.

An instantaneous feeling of rock being close above one's face, one rapid feeling of skimming flight, and—there was the Blue Grotto.

Dazzling blue, radiant cerulean blue, with argent sparkling wavelets, with walls of powdered sapphire dust, with a hush as of mystic marvel, with the fairy drip of opaline gems in place of water-drops from uplifted oars.

Then reality, human, commonplace reality—murmurous talking, louder talking, a laugh, a cry—just amusement; and then from the deep-blue depths a man like sun-lighted silver stands on a dim prow, poises himself, flies, dives, swims.

Nay, what is it all? Only the showman of the Grotto. Why not let Nature do without a showman?

Midday was past. "The San Carlo" was steaming gradually up to the Capri landing-stage.

The place was a picture—quaint boats rocked on the blue waters; picturesque fisherfolk lolled about on the sun-baked stones. Old women that were crones, but still picturesque in their almost Eastern depth of colouring; children that were very angels for beauty, young imps for rascality; hotel touts; tourists; then, like a phalanx drawn up to conquer, a string of coral-sellers.

The prettiest girls of Capri; ay, and what does that mean? They say that the Capri girls are the most beautiful girls of Italy. It is true. You will see in Capri the most lovely of Italy's lovely children.

Now, a whole morning of companionship makes even Britons sociable in these warm, free, Southern places; so Nona separated from her brothers, chattered to some San Franciscan girls she had sat by during the storm.

These girls knew everything.

"You know the name of the belle of coral-sellers, Miss Morris?" one asked.

"No; I've only heard that they tried to do you; they ask no end, but they come down to a lira for a string of coral."

"Worth dollars in New York!" the sister cried. "We're proposing to start a coral store when we leave Europe; we'd make our pile in no time."

"There she is!"

"What!—the belle?"

"Yes, they say she always wears better clothes than the rest—look how she's got up. Look at the plaiting of her hair; lovely! And the rose stuck behind her ear! And, that apron over her scarlet skirt, it's all embroidered on the bands of colour—I wonder if she did it herself! My!—she is pretty!"

So our girls strolled along.

They were not many minutes before they were asked to buy coral. A red-haired girl was the seller, just like one of those marvellously beautiful fair-haired women of the mediæval pictures—what can be more beautiful than the warm, red-gold hair ruffled and piled above eyes of warm brown, whose lashes of warm brown, too, make the shadowed eyes wells of passion!

Then came a crone with a cracked voice and a tongue that rattled so fast no one could comprehend her; then, again, two children, each with a string of small bits of coral. Persistent were they beyond all the rest, black and golden-haired pictures like the rest.

Nona bought their bits of poor coral for

half a lira, and away tore the scamps, bare-legged and with their fluttering rags streaming in the hot sun, like the radiant pennons of angels.

Pietro was lolling upon his boat which he had dragged up; Carlotta heeded him not, though in all his laziness his eyes stared hungrily and angrily at her.

The young coquette—she was the centre of a circle of young men tourists.

She was tossing her beautiful head and fingering the great amber beads round her throat. "Ah! si, Signor," she was saying, "I spik Ingless. Ze coral is four lire—ze largess is five lire." And she held up her merchandise with inborn peasant grace.

Then the young men haggled, they chaffed, they pretended to teach her English words—they outrageously flirted with her.

Carlotta was equal to them.

She did not know much English, but she knew enough for her trade, and for the rest she laughed as your Italian can laugh so easily and so gleefully. She showed her pretty white teeth and she shook her dark head, jingling her big ear-rings; she was not going to let these young milords have her coral for one soldo less than she asked.

A dark handsome man, a fisherman seemingly, in a rough jersey, lazily passed along.

He and Carlotta exchanged a glance.

He had not a nice expression, this man. His black head was closely cropped like the head of Nero in the galleries; his brows were straight, and firm, and closely knit; his mouth was close and grave; but—he had the beauty of a Cæsar.

"Ha!" a gay English boy cried, "that's the diver. I know something—eh, Carlotta!"

"Ah! si. The Signor knows—ver mooch. Everyting!" she laughed.

"The promesso sposo—there! Who told me?"

"Non capisco, Signor. I not understand."

"You—he—promesso sposo," the lad insisted ignorantly.

The girl laughed. "No, no, no. Carlotta does not say that; Carlotta will wait—will choose." No dainty lady could show more pride than this coral-seller did in the sudden lifting and strengthening of her figure.

"Come to England, Carlotta," the wild boy cried. "There are great Signors there!"

"Then Carlotta maybe will come one day. But the coral, Signor, the beautiful

coral; and only five lire, will not the Signor buy in *ricordanza*—to remember Carlotta at Capri?" Her head went on one side with the extremest, most fascinating touch of pathos.

"Dick, pay your money pleasantly, and come on. Don't fool away there any longer. I want some lunch." The boy had his sleeve pulled by an elder man.

So Carlotta pocketed her exorbitant gains, and strolled away up the street. All the strangers were going in at the hotel doors for the meal which was set out for them; trade was done for an hour or so. The beggars and the sellers slipped away, counting their gains, playing at games with the coins, squabbling, gesticulating, idling.

Carlotta sat on a stone in the shadow, thrust out her daintily shod feet, slipped off her heel-less shoes, bit into an orange she pulled out of her pocket, and enjoyed life.

Luigi Idyane went and rolled on the white road at her feet. If he was not her "promesso sposo," he ought to have been, or else why did he assume that air of possession? He was a grim-looking lover, but then he was so handsome.

Presently he got up, and walked lazily up one of the stairways which make the hillside paths up to the high real town of Capri.

At that moment, Pietro rose with a cat-like softness from his lounge on the "Sirena," and he then sauntered up to Carlotta.

"Ecco!" he said between his teeth, and stood darkly before her. "Do I not hear what all men say—what even that stranger boy said to you?"

Carlotta shrugged her shoulders, ruffling up the gathering of white linen that covered them. "People talk so much," she said carelessly.

"It is one thing I hear."

"Veramente! I hear many things; the droll English boys!"

"Bah, English boys. What is Idyane to you, Carlotta?" Pietro thundered.

"A polite man, a gentiluomo."

"And I?"

"You are rude; where is the 'Sirena'? Have you had no trade to-day?" She set her white teeth in the golden pulp of the orange.

"It is true, then!"

He strode away.

"Hè, hè, hè! You are so jealous, both of you; all of you are so jealous! Will

I be *promessa sposa* to any one of you? Bah! You are too foolish!" and the great juicy orange disappeared quickly, for though Carlotta laughed, she was feeling a flash of anger against these lovers of hers.

But had she really love for either of them? At that moment, in her coquettish pride and fury, she would have said "No." But the truth was that a month ago she thought no man in the whole of Capri, nay, in the whole of the great city of Naples, where once she had gone with her father, the equal of Pietro Fusco. The passing weeks had brought Idyane to her feet, Idyane, the Salerno man who made himself the diver, and what we have called the showman of the Blue Grotto. Idyane was rich—grew richer by that speculation of his—would, when the foreign people ceased coming, go back to Salerno and his father's trade.

The wife of Idyane would be a great woman. A Capri peasant girl has her wits, and can look forward as well as another girl.

And the days were always busy; always she had to manage her own coral trade well, and to buy the best strings, so that she should not lose her place of being the first seller. She had really no time, except to amuse herself in the pleasantest way when the one duty of buying wisely and selling profitably was attended to.

So, naturally, Pietro, who was what one may call a much plainer man than Idyane, got pushed aside from Carlotta's pleasure-loving soul.

There she sat, crossing her white-stockinged shoeless feet lazily.

"They will have a quarrel now," she said to herself; "and I cannot help it if they do."

They did have a quarrel.

Now the high road of Capri, which leads up to the high rock-built town, goes winding and mounting, winding and ever mounting leisurely and easily. Strings of visitors always went up on donkeys; everyday the same. Every day, too, the children—who clambered like young kids up and down the face of the orange-gardened cliffs—were out pestering people to buy lemons or oranges.

Two of these sat on a broken bit of wall, watching. One had a bough of lemon tree over his arm with three great golden lemons on it; the other boy had nothing, but he jingled the soldi in his ragged

pocket which a great bearded foreigner had paid for his fruit.

Behind them dropped the stairway between the orange gardens; just facing them there rose a continuation of the same rising pathway; the slow road goes zig-zag, those stony paths mount sheer and straight.

Two women, who with great baskets on their heads had just passed the boys from the lower path, crossed the road, and then they were mounting.

"I never liked him, the Salernian; he has an evil face."

"Tcha! he means nothing."

This was naught to the ragged boys, they still watched for customers, and they still jingled the soldi.

A cry came from below. Then a scuffle, and stones were heard falling, and then another cry, but this time muffled, and suddenly silenced.

Everything was happening at once; the boys would have dashed to see the fight, of course it was a fight; but then ladies were coming, and ladies have soldi.

Down from the wall the boys had leaped, making for the descending path way; now the English voices called the other way.

Away flew the boys.

Never before had they looked so handsome in their pleading; never before had they made such a glorification of their wares, or such pitiful show of need.

"They would really let the three lemons go for 'cinquanta,' fifty soldi!"

Young scamps!

Nona Morris was the girl who bought the lemon bough; she would take it to England, she declared, as it was. It was a pretty green and gold thing.

One second, and the two brown-skinned boys were off, and had sprung to their bit of wall, one jump on the far side and they would be on the downward path. If only the fight were but still going on! It would then be a day of luck for the two!

But, as we have said, everything was just then happening at once. As the boys for a second poised on the broken wall for their leap down, a man, a sailor-looking man, sprang from the gap of the path.

His eyes gleamed, his jersey was ripped up; but in a second he was gone, a flying stride carried him over the road, and up, up he went, scorning the path, and flying like a wild thing from crag to grove and grove to crag.

Boys and English strangers stood agape.

"What is it! Why——!" somebody gasped.

The boy of the lemon bough danced up to Nona, throwing up his arms. "It is a quarrel, a fight—down there. Ah! it is a great murder, certamente! Come, Signorina!"

It was true; there had been a quarrel and a fight.

It was not Idyane's fault, either, that there was not "a great murder." He had stabbed Pietro.

There the man lay with the dear life ebbing away.

The boys forgot their soldi—had they not news which was something like news? They were down on the shore, and the whole crowd of shore folk blocked the starting-place of the pathway more instantaneously than we can show.

Nona's brother was a young doctor, he did what he could to stanch the wound. He and the three or four companions carried the unconscious Pietro down the hill.

They laid him on the ground at the very place where Carlotta had sat and coquetted with Idyane, and had bitten so pleasantly into the ripe orange.

Carlotta was in the crowd. She stood like a stone.

"He will not die," the Englishman said.

Still Carlotta stood rigid. She could not see Pietro's ashy face—she would not try to see it.

But her heart! Carlotta would never again be a coquette.

There was a movement, and someone said: "They carry him to his house."

The movement was wrong, the wound burst forth afresh, the man's head fell back.

"He is dead! He is dead!" an old woman cried. "Ahimè! Ahimè!" and she threw up her skinny brown arms.

Thereupon Carlotta, the marble, motionless Carlotta, gave one shriek and dashed into the crowd.

In shocked surprise everyone gave way to her.

She knelt by Pietro.

"Pietro! Pietro! Speak!" she cried. "Is it not I who have killed you, I, Carlotta? Make me to die with you! Oh, anima mia! anima mia!"

She kissed him a thousand times. And—and—those kisses broke the deathlike faint.

Now, if you would see Pietro and Car-

lotta you must go to Capri. They are always busy there; and Carlotta asks as much for her coral as she ever did, and she makes a toddling baby ask more.

INDIAN INK.

I FANCY it is pretty well known that this [is a misnomer; it should be Chinese Ink; but as our direct communication with China dates only about forty years back, and the article used to come to us through India, it got the name which it has preserved ever since, and which is now thoroughly inrooted in the language. However, the fact remains, that when we talk of Indian, we mean Chinese, Ink.

I am not aware that the article is made anywhere but in China; and I fancy not, for its manufacture is a long tedious process which could only be made to pay where time is of very little importance, and where wages are consequently low. These conditions being found best of all in China, it is probable that for a very long time to come that Empire will preserve, as hitherto, the monopoly of its production.

Very little is known here of its method of manufacture. We find it gravely asserted in works professing authority that the Chinese do not use glue in making their ink, but add vegetable juices which render it more brilliant and indelible on paper. Experiments conducted in Europe prove that when the best lamp-black is ground up with the purest gelatine, it makes a good colour; but it has been found to be not so permanent on paper as the Chinese article.

Something there is wanting, and the question is, What is it? This can only be answered by a reference to original authorities, and fortunately our knowledge of the Chinese language and literature has taken such enormous strides during the last forty years, that we are now enabled to give a summary of the processes employed by the Celestials for hundreds, and if tradition is to be trusted, for thousands of years.

We all know the immense antiquity claimed by the Chinese for their nation. No one, therefore, will be surprised to hear that the invention of ink is attributed to Tien Tchen, who lived during the reign of Honang-ti 2697 to 2597 B.C.

But at that time the ink was different from what it is now; it was a sort of lac which was deposited on silk by a bamboo

twig. Subsequently this was superseded by a black stone which was dissolved in water; then under the Oueï, 220 to 160 B.C., was invented the process of making ink from the smoke produced by the combustion of lac and firewood. This new product was sold in balls, and, as it was easy to use, it soon superseded the ancient stone, and its manufacture was soon perfected. A poet, Oueï-fou-jen, hailing the advent of this precious help to literature, tells us that in his day the best article was produced from the fir trees, which grew on the hills of Lu-chan, in the province of Kiang-si.

This province appears to have been the seat of the manufacture in early times, for we find a King of the Tang dynasty, 618 to 903 A.D., sending an official to the chief city, charged with the duty of superintending the manufacturers, and forwarding every year to the Court a certain number of sticks of ink. Our authorities tell us a good deal about this inspectorship, into which it is unnecessary to go; but we may fairly suppose that the industry had arrived at a considerable degree of development under the Tang dynasty, and the poet already mentioned tells that the ink became blacker by age, and the glue stronger, so that the cakes became as hard as stone.

These remarks have preserved their value to this day, and give us, even now, the objects arrived at by every good maker. And we must here remember that amongst a population so dense as that of China, and where literature has always been held in the highest estimation, the consumption of ink must be enormous, especially as the innumerable Chinese characters are very much larger and very much more complicated than our simple letters, and therefore take a much greater quantity of ink.

From the earliest times "collectors," of choice brands of ink have never been wanting, and in one respect, at least, different as Eastern and Western notions may be, they both agree in this—that we do not make as good stuff now as in former times.

It was in the later days of the Tang dynasty that one Li-tchao and his son, Li-ting-Kou-i, set up a manufactory of ink in the small town of Chu-tcheou, which was then surrounded by magnificent forests of fir, from which fact we may reasonably infer that the black was to be made from the combustion of that wood. The father

had grown old in the business without making any particular reputation; the son, however, brought the processes then employed to the highest pitch of perfection; but he kept his methods a profound secret, and since his time the efforts of all the makers have been directed to producing an ink as good as his. Yet it is allowed by connoisseurs that nobody has yet succeeded in equalling his makes, especially those in shape of a sword, and of a round cake—which are his masterpieces. We are told that an infallible means of recognising the ink of Li-ting-Koueï is to break a piece off a cake and to throw it in water. If, in a month, the pieces are still unacted upon at the bottom of the vessel, we may be certain that they are really authentic. This great genius made several qualities which are distinguished by the characters stamped upon them. Three are of the highest excellence, unapproachable by any modern; and the fourth, which may be considered as the ordinary article, bears his name, together with the title conferred upon him by Imperial decree as a reward for the services he had indirectly rendered to literature.

After the death of Li-ting-Koueï the trade returned to its normal state, and maker followed maker without leaving any mark, except those imprinted on his cakes. But under the reign of Chen-tsang, A.D. 998 to 1023, Tchang-yu, purveyor to the Court, acquired a reputation almost as great as that of his predecessor; and since his time two only, Pan-kou and Tchai-sin, have gained celebrity, the latter having, it is said, succeeded in discovering some of the processes of Li-ting-Koueï.

When we come to examine the native literature on the subject, which, be it understood, makes up a considerable bulk, we find that nearly everything combustible has been used, at some time or other, for the production of the lamp-black. The Emperor Hsuan-tsang, of the Tsang dynasty, used that produced by the burning of rice, and the inhabitants of Yen-ugan that resulting from the combustion of a native rock oil, which we now know to be petroleum. But these substances have had merely a local or temporary use; and practically the manufacture resolves itself into the use of two substances: fir-wood, and oily matters in general. One well-known maker used pomegranate bark; and some writers assert that Li-ting-Koueï produced his black from the smoke of rhinoceros-horn. But the fact is, that the

qualities which go to form a first-class ink depend not so much on the raw material as on the care exercised in its treatment, and on the pains taken after the production of the raw lamp-black.

After this, the next point is the glue, which serves to bind the impalpable powder together, and to make it adhere to the paper. Practically, the only two kinds used are animal and fish gelatine; but, as may be expected, no two makers are agreed upon the preparation, the incorporation, and the quantity of the material to be used.

The ancients, we are told, also used what we know now as "size," extracted from rhinoceros-horn and stag-horn, and the use of the latter, which can be traced a long way back, is said to have been introduced from Corea.

So much for history; now for the practical part. Our authority for this is an elementary manual, written in 1398 A.D., by Chen-Ki-souen of Loo-chow.

Now, as soon as he made up his mind to go into the business, he made an exhaustive trial of all the processes known, and soon arrived at the conclusion that the simplest methods were the best. Fortified by this experience, he succeeded in producing an ink which obtained a great reputation, rivalling even that of the ancient masters. His process, then, he unfolds in his treatise, confining himself strictly to practical work.

The fir-wood, formerly used, is now replaced by the oil of hemp-seed and of dryandra cordata, although in some parts they prefer the oil of cabbage and haricot seeds, as well as that of *Gleditschia sinensis*. All these give a good result; but, if possible, it is well to employ the oil of the dryandra alone, as it is the only one which gives a brilliant black, darkening with age; all the others giving a dull black which fades after more or less time.

The best material being thus pointed out, the next thing to be done is to use it properly. Looking at the process from the scientific standpoint of this nineteenth century, we find it perfectly simple. It is a matter of common knowledge, that if oily, fatty, or resinous matters are allowed to burn with an insufficient supply of air, smoke will be produced, the carbon of which may be collected on a cold surface in proximity to the flame, and cleaned off at any desired moment. This is exactly what the Chinaman tells us to do, without of course his having the least idea of the

science of the proceeding. He instructs us to take a porcelain dish, about two feet in diameter and three-and-a-half inches deep, in the middle of which is placed a stand, six inches in diameter, and the same height as the sides of the larger vessel. Round this stand are to be placed a number of small lamps, over each of which rests a small conical dish, supported by the side of the large vessel, the stand in the middle. The large dish is now to be filled with water so that the wicks of the lamps are only just above it. The lamps are lighted, and the smoke produced, condensed on the internal surface of the cone above. We cannot omit to remark that, above everything, our Chinaman insists emphatically upon the necessity of the most scrupulous cleanliness in everything that is used, and the propriety of keeping the process out of the way of dust and of draughts.

The cones are changed from time to time, the wicks trimmed, and the lamp-black removed by a feather to its proper receptacle, care being taken that this operation takes place at not too long intervals, as in this case the black will be yellowish. The cones should be changed twenty times each day; and one hundred parts of oil give eight parts of black, each two days' make being kept together for subsequent treatment. This consists first, in sieving it through the very finest silk, all that will not pass through being thrown away. The powder thus obtained is put up in paper boxes, and hung up to the joists of a very dry room: everything damp is to be avoided. Now for the substance which is to bind this impalpable powder together and enable it to be kneaded into any desired shape. This may be the oldest, whitest, and most transparent fish-glue, which must stand in cold water for a night so as to soften it, then be heated with water till it just begins to boil, stirred well to dissolve lumps, and then allowed to cool in a wide-necked vessel. As to the quantity to be used, it varies according to the season—generally speaking, in winter and spring, little glue and much water, and the reverse in summer and autumn. It has been handed down by tradition that no good ink can be made from animal glue, but Chen-Ki-Souen assures us, that this is a delusion propagated by people who will not put themselves to the trouble of thinking or experimenting, but depend on a remark of the poet Po, who may have been a good maker of verses, but was a very bad maker of ink. Chen-Ki-Souen knew

personally, fifty years ago, a maker of Kin-Si named Ou-Ko-Leang, whose production was wholly made with animal glue, and yielded in nothing to the ancient inks. But there is glue and glue, and none must be used unless thin, yellow, and transparent, and to produce this it must be made from the very best and youngest skins, or the cuttings from drum-heads; the ordinary refuse from the butchers must be carefully avoided. But, on the whole, the best results follow from a mixture of nine parts of fish with one of animal glue, taking care that the former proportion is never exceeded. In some shops it is the custom to use little glue and much black, and this is known as the weak glue process. It produces, to be sure, a very black and very brilliant ink, which consequently sells quickly; but these qualities are but ephemeral, and disappear with age.

We have now got our lamp-black and our glue, but to the mediæval Chinese maker, something was still wanted to make the ink keep. According to their notions this preservative strengthened the glue, kept the ink from fading, and made the sticks as hard as rhinoceros-horn. The ancient makers never omitted to use it, and chiefly to this was owing the brilliancy and durability of their products. But unfortunately the recipes for this essential were as numerous as the makers themselves. Every solution that could be thought of was pressed into service, and naturally each maker swore by his own nostrum, a peculiarity which we all know has not been confined to Chinese or to the Middle Ages alone. It would be tedious to enumerate all the preservative solutions recommended, more especially as we are not acquainted with many of them, except by the local Chinese name. Further, our authority tells us at the end of his dissertation that to obtain good results it is only necessary that the black be perfectly pure, and the glue good and in small quantity. This being the case, no preservative is required; an assertion which will be readily accepted by all scientific inquirers of the present day.

All the materials being now ready, a pound of black is put into a vase and a piece of silk placed over it, through which the warm solution of glue is poured. The mixture is then thoroughly well stirred, so as intimately to incorporate the black and the glue, then formed into balls, which are wrapped in cloth and taken to be heated in a water-bath for fifteen minutes. The

balls are then taken out and put into a mortar, where two men, with large pestles, beat them into the form of a cake for four hours, alternately taking half of the paste to be heated while beating the other, which in its turn finds its way to the furnace. This beating is an essential point of the manufacture, on which the ancients insisted strongly, saying that the longer the beating the better the products.

Suppose, then, the beating has come to an end; the paste is now kneaded into sticks, wrapped in wet cloths, and put for a minute or two in the water-bath, then weighed and placed in a porcelain vase covered with a wet cloth and kept in a trough filled with water till the second beating.

A workman takes a cake in his pincers, places it on an anvil, and beats it with a hammer. After about two hundred blows the dull colour of the paste becomes brilliant; after four hundred, still more so; and the mass is now hard. Finally, after six hundred, the still has become as malleable as flour-paste. It is now taken by hand and kneaded over and over again; and it is at this point that the scent—usually either camphor or musk—is added. To get a good result, the kneading must be done very quickly, or else the paste gets hard and will not work. The best plan is to knead only small portions at once, to add them together, knead the whole into one mass, divide into small portions again, and so on. When all this has been done a sufficient number of times, the paste is ready for the moulds, which may be of any shape, but, as we know very well in Europe, are usually long and narrow. They may be made of any size, but the ancients, whom it is well to follow, preserved the happy medium. Sticks long and thick are hard to make, and last too long; when short and slender, they are easy to make, but do not last long enough and are never of a good colour. It is, therefore, not advisable to have them weighing more than three or four taels—one thousand seven hundred and fifty to two thousand one hundred and eighty-five grains. When the paste has been placed in the wooden moulds, comes the time to ornament them, to stamp the name, quality, trade mark, and to gild the characters. This done, the paste must be dried and to this end the sticks are wrapped in paper and buried in a receptacle filled with rice-straw ashes, which have been dried in the sun and carefully sieved. A layer of ashes is first

laid, on which is placed a layer of sticks of ink, wrapped in paper. These are covered with another layer of ashes which receives a layer of sticks; these again are covered with ashes on which is placed another series of sticks, and the whole is then covered up with ash. Every day the apparatus is emptied, half the ash removed, and its place supplied by a fresh quantity, which is thoroughly mixed with the rest. The duration of this process depends on the season and the size of the sticks, and ranges from a day and a night to two days and three nights; but no absolute rule can be given. The best rule is, not to remove the sticks until two struck together give out a good metallic sound; they are then neither too hard nor too soft. The drying being completed, the sticks are brushed clean, left in a cool shady room for a day or two, then rubbed briskly with a coarse rag, and then with a hard, greasy brush. This last operation enables us to judge if the drying has been successful, if the sticks take a brilliant colour they are dry enough; if, however, they should be dull, they must be sent back to the drying-room.

The next operation is to rub the sticks with an old piece of matting slightly wet, after which they are rubbed with a soft cloth, polished by an agate, and then dried by hanging them in baskets to the roof of the room. When sufficiently dried, each stick is wrapped in paper, and whenever the weather is fine, the packet is opened, the stick wiped, left for some time in a current of air, and then put back again. If the weather is bad, the room must be kept at a constant temperature, always remembering that damp is the greatest enemy to contend against. In this way the stick will get thoroughly dried in two or three years. The same end may be attained, however, in a quicker but odder way, by placing the sticks on a small charcoal furnace, then placing them in a box well lacquered outside, which is to be kept for several weeks in a bed which is regularly occupied.

Finally, we are instructed that it is rank heresy to dip the cake in water and rub it on the palette. When a boy, I am afraid I broke this elementary rule of Chinese practice, which is to put a drop or two of water on the palette and then rub the stick in it. Another point, too, to be observed, is to rub with straight and not circular strokes.

"CLOSER THAN A BROTHER."

By G. B. STUART.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER V. WOODCRAFT.

PASSING hastily across the garden, and through a side wicket, May Bulteel found herself in the Home Coppice before the angry colour had died down in her cheeks; then the moist spring air, and the dappled light and shadow of the beech trees and oaks, and the gay tossing of a daffodil head here and there among the brown undergrowth, soothed her ruffled spirits. After all, it was pleasant to be twenty-five and to expect Arthur Twisden to dinner, even though an uncompromising brother from Australia contrived to make things as disagreeable as possible in the home where, hitherto, she had been almost mistress, and, by many, had been reputed heiress.

In justice to May Bulteel, I must say that the idea of her brother's return making a great difference to her prospects had never presented itself to her; though John was far from being the John of her fifteen years' imaginings, she was too loyal to her family to think that she would have made a more fitting suzerain for Bulteel than the heir male. But she had been cruelly wounded in her two tenderest points by her brother in that first interview; she had been blamed unjustly—and she was quick to resent even justly incurred blame—and this Prodigal Son had shown himself capable of criticising and disapproving the ways of Bulteel, even the character of her late father, in a manner certainly unbecoming a wanderer so recently recalled from the desert.

It would be long before an impulsive, headstrong girl like May would forgive her brother for being so different a man to the John she had pictured; his very appearance, altered as of course it must be by fifteen years of rough living, annoyed her, because it was unexpected; though most women, and all men, would have agreed that the transformation of the weedy, undeveloped boy in the crayon portrait that hung in May's bed-room into the man of to-day, was as marvellous as it was desirable.

At a turn in the wood May came upon her brother, the head-keeper, and an under-labourer, evidently in high discus-

sion over something. She would have passed them with ostentatious indifference, but John stopped her, lifting his cap in a formal way, as if she were a stranger whom he had not met before that day.

"I have been speaking to Simmons about clearing out a quantity of brush-wood and undergrowth. You know how much this will improve the look of the coppice on the park side, where, for some hundred yards inside the paling, there is nothing but the poorest scrub; not a decent tree of any size has been able to grow for the tangle of bushes and rubbish. I propose to throw back the paling to where the wood proper begins, have all the bushes stubbed up, and the piece that is reclaimed sown and turfed so as to extend the park all along that side. What do you say to the idea?"

It was the longest speech John had made to his sister since their first unlucky meeting. He spoke diffidently, and with the evident intention of propitiating her. But it is doubtful whether Miss Bulteel was ever softened by a man's submissiveness.

"I don't like it at all," she answered icily; then, as if there could be no further discussion, took a few steps on her way.

John's dark face flushed uncomfortably. The keeper and his underling, though they had stood aside, were evidently listening and watching with interest the indications of a struggle between the old power and the new.

"What don't you like?" the young man asked, humbly enough. "This scrub is surely no advantage to the property, and any addition to the park must be a distinct gain; besides, it is easy work, and will employ——"

"Why don't you say at once you want ready money, and mean to cut the oaks?" she interrupted.

"Because I am in no want of ready money, and there is scarcely an oak of any size in the whole plantation—certainly none among the bush that we have marked."

"Scrub, bush!" she repeated mockingly. "I daresay you know very well how to deal with an Australian jungle; but I think you had better leave an English gentleman's park alone. You can scarcely improve upon it. Would you advise a bush fire to clear the ground, or what? And now that you know my opinion, perhaps you will let me go on. I would not interrupt your woodcraft any longer."

"Are you going far?" her brother asked, ignoring the taunt, and giving a look of genuine anxiety at a watery gleam of sunshine backed by a deep purple cloud, which showed at the end of the straggling beech avenue. "There will be rain directly; the glass has dropped very suddenly, and it is not safe for you to go out of reach of the house without making preparations for a storm."

"That is entirely my affair, thank you. I am going through the wood to Mark's End, to see Mrs. Cooper. Perhaps you are unaware that in consequence of your dismissal of her husband the children have been unable to attend school!"

"I am very sorry for the result; but you know my rule. I will not have an idler and a drunkard at work on Bulteel."

"You must have been singularly lucky in Queensland if you never met a worse man than Dick Cooper."

"We are not speaking of Wambo, but of Bulteel."

"I am not going to argue about either," Miss Bulteel said, with a shrug of her shoulders which would have induced a less patient man to give her a good shaking in spite of the keepers' presence. "I am going to see what I can do for the wife and children of the man whom I consider you have treated most tyrannically. You seem to have no idea of the results to the innocent and unoffending of an ill-considered act like this dismissal of Cooper. The virtuous people you had under you in Queensland presumably had no families."

May was too angry even to lower her voice, and the grins on the faces of the two servants showed that they, at all events, appreciated her sarcasm. John Bulteel gave no sign of having understood her, but, keeping at her side as she resolutely pursued her way through the coppice, accompanied her for the next fifty yards in silence. Then in quick, decisive tones, which the girl had never before heard him use, he again took up the subject which she imagined she had disposed of.

"Remember, that you never again speak to me before any of my servants as you spoke just now! You are more accustomed to deal with servants than I am, and therefore you know right well that it is an unheard-of mistake to discuss the character or the dismissal of anyone before others of his own station; of the ridicule to myself, their master, I will only say that it is not like the generosity of a Bulteel to add to

the difficulties of an already strained position. The Bulteels have their prejudices, but they are not often unfair. I leave this to your consideration, but the other matter I must state as a command: as long as you remain at Bulteel, you must refrain from discussing my treatment of my servants in public."

"You are perfectly right," May Bulteel found herself admitting, for the first time since her brother's return agreeing with him, and to her own detriment too! "I admit that I was wrong to speak of your dealings with Cooper before Simmons and Pratt, and I ask your pardon for it. It shall not happen again, as long as I remain at Bulteel. Now will you let me get on to Mark's End?"

The young Squire lifted his hat and stood aside, watching the girl's tall figure as she passed rapidly down the green ride. "Ah," he said to himself, turning at length and retracing his steps slowly to the clearing where the two servants patiently waited, "I thought I was not mistaken; the sense of honour is there as I expected. What a thing it is to be born aristocratic!" Then, as the keeper came a few paces forward, he explained in a matter-of-fact tone: "You see, Simmons, Miss Bulteel is set against any changes—you are all so conservative here: but it is not worth vexing her about a few wretched saplings; the matter can stand over for the present, and we must contrive something else to give the old men some work. That will do for to-day."

"'Pull devil, pull baker,' twixt marster and Miss May," quoth Pratt to Simmons when they had got to a safe distance.

CHAPTER VI. A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY.

"YOU have no business to run such risks, May! Remember the cough you had at Christmas, and the doctor's warning about getting wet!"

"How was I to know that a storm was going to blow up all in a moment? And who made you family physician as well as adviser in general at Bulteel, Master Arthur?" But May did not speak as if she resented the young man's interference, or his recollection of her bad cough in the winter.

"Your brother told me he had warned you not to go so far, and we sent off George with your cloak and umbrella."

"You are really very thoughtful," interrupted May, with two angry little spots

of colour flaming up in her cheeks. "John's care for me has evidently been accumulating all these fifteen years, and now bursts upon me with unexpected violence. Has he been complaining to you of my unsisterly ways, and contrasting them with his own fraternal tenderness? I ought to be very well looked after between you both!"

Arthur Twisden looked astonished; he and May Bulteel were firm friends of many years' standing, and he could not at all understand this ebullition of temper; he had never seen her pettish or unreasonable before.

"Your brother did not complain of anything; he only regretted that you should run the risk of a wetting, and asked me if you were strong. You did not use to object to a little petting, May!"

"But I do object to being incessantly interfered with—remember that, Arthur," said the girl; and her still heightened colour warned the young man to change the subject: unhappily he did not hit upon a happier one.

"Bulteel and I have been marking some improvements in the park," he observed. "He has seen, what our eyes must have missed through having it so constantly before them, that the view, as well as the tidiness of the whole place, is getting spoilt by a lot of undergrowth and neglected corners. We decided what was to be done this morning, and, as he never lets the grass grow under his feet apparently, he has been round again with Simmons this afternoon while I was at the farm accounts, and to-morrow the work can be begun. A wonderful improvement to the place, and a great boon to the people about, for it is easy sort of work, and can employ a lot of old fellows who are past anything but hedging and stubbing out roots. I believe that was Bulteel's chief object—to find these old labourers a job, for there are half-a-dozen or more hanging about ready and willing to work, poor old chaps! if anyone will employ them."

May was thunderstruck. She sat staring at Arthur Twisden, as he gossiped on in his pleasant way with little odds and ends of news connected with the estate; but she did not hear him. She was thinking with shame that, for the second time that day, her brother had given her a lesson in generosity; she disliked him more and more as these unexpected traits developed themselves, but she could not any longer despise him; she was a Bulteel, and knew what the character of a gentleman should

be. She suddenly stopped Twisden by laying her hand on his arm: "I spoke to John about those trees in the park—and—and—objected to their removal. Will you tell him that I am convinced now that his alterations are needed?"

"I think you had better tell him yourself," Arthur answered, suddenly pulled up in the middle of a story about a gamecock, and quick to observe that there was more under this request than the words implied; "but you will not have changed your brother's mind by objecting ever so much, I must tell you, for he was quite set upon it, and I heard him giving his orders to Simmons myself about it."

Nevertheless, when Arthur Twisden made some allusion to the "new woods and forests' decrees" at dinner that evening, John Bulteel answered shortly, and as if the affair were of little moment:

"I've altered my mind about that. I don't think I shall do anything to the park at present. May I give you another slice of mutton?" and the guest thought best to let the matter pass too.

Arthur Twisden was an agreeable addition to the ill-assorted party of three who generally sat down to dinner at Bulteel. He was a man accustomed to like and be liked by society, and his chief characteristic was unobtrusive ease of manner. You never saw him do anything which was not suitable and becoming. He always said the right thing, or better still, said nothing at all with so appropriate a reticence, that everyone else wished they had held their tongues. His clothes, his looks, his very gestures, were always to the point. The best thing about a man of this sort is, that he puts other people at their ease. They feel he is to be thoroughly depended on whatever happens, and, in losing their own sense of responsibility, they lose their self-consciousness and its attendant blunders.

John Bulteel was at his very best in Arthur Twisden's presence; the two had taken a fancy to each other, and the Australian forgot his colonial disadvantage and home grievances while he talked with this man, who, though so different to him in appearance, manners, and up-bringing, had also known responsibility and its effect in solidifying the character. Twisden was a London solicitor, and at least five years' Bulteel's junior; a man whose travels had carried him no farther than a business trip to Paris; yet his experience of life, and his knowledge of human nature, with the habit which he had acquired in his pro-

fession of thinking, deciding, and acting very rapidly for himself and other people, gave him an assurance which made him a very valuable friend. As he sat opposite May Buteel, with his back to the long dining-room windows which still admitted the clear spring twilight, his figure looked slight and boyish; John Buteel's broad shoulders, and rugged, powerful face would have stood for an impersonation of colonial life, while Arthur Twisden represented as completely the quick, highly-strung, intelligent Londoner of to-day.

Mrs. Buteel was always agreeably affected by the presence of strangers, especially of the superior sex; she was always doing her best to relieve the tedium of "this sad house," as she had called Buteel since her husband's death, and had convinced herself that they ought to see a few people "for May's sake," now that their first mourning was over. She fluttered away at the top of the table, assured that no one but herself knew of the hope she cherished that May would solve the present difficulties of her home-life by marrying Arthur Twisden; whereas both Arthur and May knew perfectly well whither her thoughts tended, and were sometimes at a loss how to appear unconscious of her very obvious intentions.

"Dear little May!" Arthur thought to himself, looking across the table. "Any one might be proud to have such a charming wife, and if she and John can't succeed in hitting it off, I really must interfere and carry her off to a home of her own! That is, evidently, what is wrong; she has been mistress here too long, for Mrs. Buteel counts for nothing if you only go to work the right side, and it is hard for a girl of her spirit to knock under to an almost stranger. Though if they were not brother and sister, I could fancy May submitting very gracefully to such a master as Buteel; always provided she had not given away her heart already, for she is not a girl to change. Bah! what nonsense! What an absurd view to take of a long-lost brother! But, to be sure, one gets into a habit of criticising Buteel from the fact of his long absence and curious experiences." And here Twisden gave over stroking his light brown moustache—his habit when he was thinking—and threw himself into animated discussion with Mrs. Buteel on a recent fashionable marriage of which she

had read the details in the "Queen," and he had been a guest. They managed to do all the talking, for May was utterly silent; and John, unless specially appealed to for an express opinion, did not generally contribute to the general conversation. He had not yet learnt the art of talking for talking's sake, which is one of the chief accomplishments of the nineteenth century. At Wambo no one had talked unless there was something absolutely necessary to communicate.

And presently the dog-cart came round, while Mr. Twisden and Mrs. Buteel were still intent on making out the name of the ninth bridesmaid which had been misprinted in the papers, and which Arthur could not recall; the young man had to drive back to Barkham Junction, so as to be in time for the first fast train up to town the following day.

There was a sudden rising of everybody.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Buteel; I will try and send you the 'Lady's Pictorial' for last week; that ought to have everything. Many thanks for keeping me to dinner!"

"I will drive you over to Barkham," said John, coming back in his light overcoat. "Take a cigar, Twisden; are you ready?"

"Where is May?" the young man asked. "I can't go without saying good-bye to her"—they were out in the hall by this time.

"I am here," May answered, running down the stairs, with a long fur cloak over her grenadine dress. "I am coming with you as far as Barkham. I want some fresh air, and, if John drives, you can take me instead of George."

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXVII.

It was a wedding on which Tilly was intent when she met Fred Temple next day by appointment; but if he had counted on having her undivided attention, a disappointment lay in wait for him. She had relented and meant to be kind when she extended him the invitation, but she had not thought of giving him further opportunities of explaining his hopes, and she had, therefore, provided herself with a companion.

"Honoria," she said, walking into her friend's room before breakfast, "I am going to a marriage to-day. Will you go with me?"

"Gracious!" exclaimed Honoria, driven to the use of the expression by her extreme astonishment; "is it your own?"

"No," said Tilly composedly. "I'll give you warning before that comes off."

"It isn't—it can't be—your cousin's," murmured Honoria—she abandoned her loose black locks to disorder and held the brush suspended while she looked at Tilly as if she would bore through to her inmost thought.

"I don't see why you need be so very sure of that," said Tilly with great calmness; "but you needn't go on guessing, because I will tell you. It is the marriage of young Austin and Agnes May."

"The grey-haired clerk and the drawing-girl!" said Honoria severely. "Tilly, have you been encouraging this? Don't you know that you will have the whole body of Political Economists down on you

for promoting the growth of pauperism? They haven't twopence-halfpenny a year between them."

Honoria, it will be seen, knew nothing of the Christmas favours which had fallen to young Austin, and Tilly did not think it needful to enlighten her.

"Some people like living on twopence-halfpenny," she said, a smile faintly curling the corners of her mouth.

"Much you know about it, my dear!" cried her friend, surveying her with one of those comprehensive glances with which one woman takes in another from the crown of her head to the tips of her toes. "Why, your gown alone would cost them a year's income."

"Perhaps you had better come and remonstrate with them while there is time," said Tilly. "I daresay you could catch Mr. Austin before he goes to church; and, if you brought enough political economy to bear on him, you might get him to see how foolish it is to marry."

"It is only foolish to marry on nothing," said Honoria sententiously. "Love is reserved for brilliant creatures like you, who can afford the expensive luxury. The rest of us have to get along without it. Oh, I'll come: I suppose it is too late to stop it. I'll come to give them my pity."

It was indeed too late to stop it, for Tilly had been working since Christmas Day for no other end. The two young boarders from the upper regions had made so faint an impression on the other members of the household that their faces were hardly missed when they disappeared from the dining-table. Mrs. Drew, who alone had had a word or a smile for them, was in the secret of Tilly's plans, and helped to arrange matters with Madame Drave. Madame, indeed, did not hide her willing-

ness to part with a young man and woman whose places could be so easily filled, and in whom happiness was developing an appetite which might possibly become too exacting.

So in the darkness of a winter's afternoon their modest possessions were carried downstairs, the good-natured traveller—at anchor for a moment from his travels—lending a willing hand with the heavier box which held the artistic properties, and managing so adroitly that even Mrs. Moxon remained unaware of the exodus.

When Tilly had taken a kind farewell of the shy young lovers in her own room, she stole upstairs to the deserted quarters under the roof.

A lighted candle on the mantel-piece flickered in the draught, and lit the artist's garret with uncertain glimmer, accentuating its ghostly bareness. The sketches which had been pinned upon the walls were removed; the furniture was of the most meagre description, and no article of it matched another; the stove-pipe had blackened a large ring upon the cracked plaster of the ceiling; the curtainless window seemed to invite the grey night to enter and hold revel with the desolation within.

Tilly held the candle up and looked round gravely. The young girl, who had passed years here, had made no bustle in life nor won any place in the regard of the world. She had lived laborious days, unsunned by success, yet here, nourished on this barren soil, a beautiful love story had blossomed and had made even her austere life fair. Tilly could well believe that its crown of perfection must have been reached when the consciousness of their mutual tenderness first dawned upon the lovers, though no word of it had been whispered. A glance; a touch of the hand; a smile enough to make the day rich; something of its subtle charm may have evaporated when the vows were exchanged. So she thought, but possibly that was because Fred's love-making had been a little too explicit, and had left nothing to be guessed or fancied.

"I wish I knew what it meant," she said to herself, as she thought of the light which had illuminated the girl-artist's face, and all for a young fellow who presented no brilliant side to an observer, and who would probably have been held by most people as too insignificant to reward observation. If it went by looks, Master Fred's chances ought to have been magnificent.

After this survey Tilly redoubled her energies, and it was mainly by her aid that the wedding was arranged for so early a date. When Fred called punctually at ten o'clock—having, it is to be feared, secured release from Perpetual Motion by some adroit fiction—and was told of the affair in hand, he may be pardoned for feeling an upward bound of his spirit, and even for rehearsing in imagination the day when he should be going with Tilly on wedding business that more nearly concerned themselves. Fred, anyhow, knew what he wanted, and meant to have it.

Even the presence of Miss Walton could not wholly dash his satisfaction, though her absence would not have grieved him. As the carriage with which Uncle Bob burdened Tilly's state bore them off, more than one pair of eyes followed them. Mrs. Sherrington yielded a sigh for the wealth which was so ill-distributed that none of it had fallen into the lap of her husband; little Miss Dicey, who had a troublesome hero and heroine in hand at the moment, flew to the dining-room window to capture some realistic detail, and encountered Mr. Runciman there in an attitude of savage gloom, watching the vanishing wheels.

Mrs. Moxon, doubtless, was at her post above, shivering over the indecorous licence of the age, that allowed a young man and two young women to drive all over London unchaperoned. So many people were busy-ing themselves with Tilly and her love problem, and she had only thoughts to spare for another pair of lovers, whose humble lot at least exempted them from criticism!

"First of all, I want some flowers—white flowers," she said, looking at Fred for directions.

White flowers are not difficult to get in winter, and they drove to a nursery where the most exacting taste could scarcely fail to be satisfied; she bought of the best, a bridal bouquet of special magnificence, and one each for Honoria and herself of pale yellow roses.

"Am I not to be decorated?" demanded Fred enviously.

"You shall have a button-hole," she said smilingly; but when he had selected one to his mind, she ordered a second to be made.

"How inquisitive you both are!" she said gaily, in answer to their questions. "Who is going to be bridesmaid? Well, I am." She opened a long coat she wore, and let them have a peep of a festive costume whose splendours it hid. "Who is going to be groomsman? Of that I am

not quite certain, but he may as well have a rose."

"If the post is vacant," said Fred, "here is an applicant for it."

"I rather think it is filled up," she said with a laugh. "It is the bridegroom's privilege to choose."

Honorä made a shrewd guess as to the destination of the flower that lay on Tilly's lap. The roses made the wintry air fragrant with their sweetness, and there was a smile on Tilly's lips as if some happy thought was dwelling with her. They took the breath of summer with them to the City.

It was to an old church not very far from the river and its traffic, and yet hidden from sight and sound of it by narrow streets and crowding roofs, that the carriage took them. From the yellow light without, and the haste of feet, you pass within to a gloom and a hush which are in strangely sharp contrast; the thick old walls guard the silence well; the business of the world and its clamour fall to a murmur here.

"What a tomb!" said Fred, with a shiver, turning up the collar of his great-coat. "Don't you feel as if we'd come to bury bride and groom, best man and maid?" he asked Miss Walton, with whom he shared a narrow, high-backed pew.

"Hush!" she warned him; "here they come! Your cousin is the groomsman." She smiled in satisfaction at her own insight.

"By Jove!" said Fred with suppressed laughter, "and a good choice too! Poor old John! he's solemn enough to suit the occasion."

At the altar the priest had begun to read, and the two solitary spectators had to hold their peace. Fred used the moments to forecast the coming days. The scent of Honorä's bouquet brought with it a subtle suggestion of garden spaces and country delights; he and Tilly should be married in summer—in June, the month of roses; and he would take her away to some quiet, green place, where the new life should begin in simplicity and truth. It is to some future, some dreamed-of day that we all turn when the burden of the present becomes too heavy for us; in some happily imagined time the difficult will become easy, the rough path be made plain.

If Fred looked to his marriage as a release from embarrassments and debts

that pressed him close, he no less meant it to be the beginning of a life of higher aims and aspirations; it is much easier to be good when you can spread out all your virtues against a background of prosperity; but possibly even the wish to be good in the future made Fred a little better in the present. Happiness, which for the moment seemed to be within his grasp, at least made him gay and genial; and, when the little wedding party came down the aisle, he was ready to greet his cousin with something more than his usual cordiality.

"Well, old man," he said, laying a hand on John's shoulder, "one doesn't look to see you on this sort of business. How did you manage to shake off the shop?"

John had held to his promise of "seeing Austin through" the morning ceremony; but he had not come with any festive feelings, and his face was stern and drawn.

The last few weeks had been bitter to him—the more bitter because he could do nothing but bear their pain. To his honest, singularly upright nature, this load of unmerited dishonour was as hard as it well could be, and he could not take the satisfaction out of his own conscious integrity which it is supposed to bestow. It is all very well to know that you are innocent; but unless other people know it too, you do not seem to have gained very much. "Other people," which he used with a careful vagueness, meant in his case Tilly. Perhaps if there had only been his uncle, he might have relieved his irritation by writing him down a madman and calling him a fool; but the old man's verdict meant banishment from Tilly, and that was hard. There had been time for the growth of a good deal of morbid discouragement in the weeks since he had seen her, and it was easy enough for him to persuade himself—at least in the intervals of despondency which alternated with his just anger—that she, too, held him guilty.

Here, then, was an answer to those unworthy doubts of her. She had slid her hand within his arm and was looking at him with a candour and a pleasure which had not a hint of distrust to shadow them. They had both forgotten the bridal pair, and were as busy as they with each other.

"Oh, John," she said, "I was so afraid something would keep you from coming."

"Nothing but the thought of displeasing you would have done that."

"I have missed you," she said simply, "I have missed you very much."

"I suppose," he began and his brow darkened, "my uncle"—he paused abruptly and changed the form of his question. "The reason for my banishment remains? You would have told me if——"

"Of course," she said with a shadow of reproach, "I will tell you the moment it is found. I look for it every day. I feel sure that it will be found."

"I don't know that the finding would avail me much," he said with a rather bitter melancholy; "my uncle never cared for me, and I sometimes think he was glad to grasp at anything which seemed to give him ground for distrust."

"Don't say that," she implored, suffering the pangs of a divided loyalty. "If you knew him—as some day you will know him—you would see how truly good he is, though he may seem to be harsh. It is all a mistake."

"Ah well," he smiled at her logic which gave a verdict both for plaintiff and defendant; but he would do nothing to make her tenderness more difficult. "Ah, well, I don't say that I have any right to exact a better opinion from him. The tie of kinship doesn't create a right—it's a bit of false reasoning to suppose that because a man is your nephew you must believe him to be made of better stuff than other people; and he had every ground to distrust one of our name. When I reason like that, I begin to feel as if some day I might come to justify his view," he laughed, intending to cheer her.

"But I cannot feel like that," she answered earnestly. "I shall never rest until he comes to justify my view."

"Bless you for that word," said John; and how, indeed, could he help the stirring of a new cheerfulness?

Fred's cordiality was another surprise for which he was willing to be grateful; and thus, with a happiness that they seemed to have caught from the new-made man and wife, they all passed out of the dark old church, and left it to relapse into its ghostly sleep.

Outside, the world waited for them; but the shy young bride and groom were to begin it alone, and had agreed to carry their honeymoon delights down to the sea. Tilly's carriage whisked them off on the first stage of the journey, after good-byes which had an air of guilty haste on the youthful husband's part.

"Well," said Fred, staring after the carriage that carried off this new-made

bliss, "I never saw a bridegroom yet who didn't look more or less of a sneak; and that little fellow is no exception. He looked like a thief expecting immediate arrest."

"You will show us how it ought to be done," said Honoria serenely.

"Will you come and see me in that capacity?" he asked, feeling that he had not done justice to her pleasing qualities.

"She will come and give you her pity," said Tilly, with a laugh; "she feels nothing but commiseration for the misguided people who get married."

"I don't think Mr. Temple will want my commiseration," said Honoria briskly. "He isn't one of the foolish of the earth; he won't marry till he has amassed a handsome fortune, and, when people are rich, all things are permitted to them."

Fred looked at her sharply, finding something less pleasing to his ear in this sub-acid speech; but she was innocently intent on buttoning a rebellious glove, and as she presently fell behind with John and held him in talk, he controlled himself and reined in his annoyance.

Nothing could well spoil a day in which he secured so large a share of Tilly's sweet company, with neither chaperon nor uncle to come between them.

"We ought to go somewhere; we ought to do something," someone had suggested; but he cared very little where they went or what they did so long as he was allowed to walk by her side. She suffered him gently—perhaps even gaily—and she listened to him quite freely and without restraint, honestly giving him every chance to show the best of himself; and though, naturally, he would rather have been taken on faith at his own valuation, he was touched and pleased by her evident wish to be fair.

Other girls, whom he had known, had made no difficulty about accepting his devotion, and had even, possibly, gone a little way to meet it; but she was not as other girls are.

The day was to be given up to revels, and John, having been allowed by the Bank, in its generosity, to subtract it from his brief summer holiday, was free to share the wedding breakfast which they were to eat in honour of the new-married pair. The question of place, after desultory debate, was finally settled by Tilly, who declared that she had always longed to dine in one of the old City eating-houses, where the odour of the chops and steaks that have

frizzled for the satisfaction of illustrious appetites still seems to linger.

Fred consulted with his cousin for a moment, and they decided on an old hostelry where it was possible to secure a private room, lined with oak panelling of so deep a stain and furnished with pewters and tankards of so undeniable an antiquity, that it was easy for the most limited imagination to conjure up a Boswell chronicling the nods and yawns of a Johnson, or an Elia stirring laughter by the subtle and whimsical quality of his humour. It was good enough, at any rate, for the four young people whose literary cravings were not too fastidious; and it seemed a very fitting place to drink the health of the couple who were to spend their days within City bounds—for the firm to whom the young clerk had transferred his services had given him quarters over the office.

"Art won't flourish among the smoke and din," said Fred; "but I daresay Mrs. Austin will renounce the brush for the needle."

"I think it ought rather to be stimulated," said Tilly. "Wait till you see their rooms. They look down on a garden a great deal greener than ours at Kensington, and the City sounds are so much hushed that they only give you a sense of cheerful company at hand."

But it was not of the Austins alone they talked, but of anything, and everything, and nothing. To John it was the happiest day he had known since that first meeting of which it reminded Tilly too, as she leaned an elbow on the little table and smiled across at him. They went afterwards to the Crystal Palace, where they were leniently uncritical of its wintry aspect, and were as happy as if no such thing as a chaperon had ever troubled their peace. It had been arranged, indeed, that if Mrs. Drew were able to escape the scrutiny of Mrs. Moxon, and bribe her husband to silence (two very difficult matters), she was to join them; but she did not appear, and they got on without her.

When they parted in the dark at Yarrow House, Fred passed his hand through John's arm and said:

"Come along to my diggings and have a pipe, old man," an impulse towards friendliness which lifted him a long way in Tilly's regard. Somehow, it seemed to her with the happiness of the day still upon her, as if the wrong that had grieved her was in some unguessed-at way to be made right, and to

see the cousins going off arm-in-arm gave her great comfort; though she could not have given any reason for thinking so.

Honorias sought an opportunity that evening to be alone with Mrs. Drew. She found her in her own room, awaiting the return of her husband from an Anglo-Indian banquet to which he had been bidden. She was nodding in her chair before the fire, but she sat up with a start when Honorias entered.

"Ah, my dear," she said, anticipating reproaches, "it really wasn't to be managed. The Major wouldn't make up his mind about this dinner, and I had to follow all his hot and cold fits; that is what a wife is for," she laughed her pleasant laugh.

"Then I'm glad I'm not married," said Honorias, making a speech common to young womanhood, and not always to be accepted too literally. "We guessed it was Mrs. Moxon."

"She did come in and out a good deal," Mrs. Drew admitted; "in fact, I think it was that that decided the Major to go. Come now, my dear, tell me all about it."

"There's very little to tell," said Honorias; but, in her anxiety to tell it, she accepted one of the chairs she had learned to look on with distrust. "The couple were married, and that's all about them, except that I'm certain Tilly must have given her her gown; it was simple enough, but it was the simplicity of Bond Street. The play lost none of its interest when they went away—for me at least. The happy-ever-after stage which begins with the wedding bells is very nice, I daresay; but it isn't exciting to the spectator, whereas this problem which those three are trying to solve——"

Mrs. Drew looked up at the pause Honorias made, and the girl suddenly laughed.

"I should call it a comedy, if it were not likely to be a tragedy for one of those young men."

"For which?" asked Mrs. Drew gravely.

"Which?" repeated Honorias. "That's what I'm always asking myself. I don't believe she in the least knows herself. She is very sorry for the one, and she is amused by the other. I suppose it will depend on which feeling gets the upper hand at some critical point."

"Her uncle's wishes will count for much with her."

"Yes, but he isn't a tyrant; and she won't make him one by yielding too much."

"Then," said Mrs. Drew with her easy

laugh, "I don't see that we've advanced much; we are just where we were. I wish," she ended in the plenitude of her good-nature, "that there were some way of making them both happy."

"She might get out of the difficulty by making them both miserable," suggested Honoria, "and then at least they couldn't envy each other. If your view of matrimony is correct," she added maliciously, "the cousin's cousin ought to be the man. He has moods enough to keep a woman employed for life in their study. But if it were me," cried Honoria, abandoning grammar in her hurry to explain her views; "I'd have the cousin. He'd make it so delightfully easy for you to prove yourself his superior."

"BEGGARS—SAD AND JOLLY."

"THE poor ye have always with you;" and are likely to have, so long as women earn three farthings an hour when they can get work; so long as the regulation price (before the "sweater" has taken tithe of it) is for army leggings, two shillings a dozen; for prisoners' flannel drawers, one shilling and threepence; for frilled lawn-tennis aprons, fivepence half-penny.

Of course, besides the hardworkers, there are the idlers, either through laziness or want of work, and there are the wanderers, the "jolly beggars" of Burns, the tramps, who never did a stroke of work save on compulsion, and never mean to. These have always been in the land, often in numbers relatively far larger than now. They have been treated with alternate petting and coercion: in one town poor people borrowing a half-penny to give to a beggar; in the next, the constable clapping them in the stocks, and giving them a good whipping before letting them go. The strangest thing is that this whipping was generally followed by a dole. In many parish books, about three hundred years ago, we find such entries as these:

"Payd for wippen tow pore folk, ijd."

"Payd and given to a pore man and his wif that was wipped, iiijd."

This was double the usual tariff, which is represented by

"Gave the tow when they went, ijd."

In Saxon times, the beggar, unless he found refuge in one of the then thinly scattered monasteries, was in evil case. He belonged to the dangerous tribe of

"masterless" men, people for whom no one was answerable; and those who sheltered him were fain to do it by stealth, for if a man staid with you more than a couple of days, you were accountable not only for anything he might then do, but also for his antecedents. Mr. Ribton Turner thinks race had a good deal to do with beggary. When you take away a man's means of life, he must either starve, or rob, or beg. The oldest natives of Great Britain were short, dark people—Basques, say some, Eskimo say others; the tall light-haired Gael beat them out from almost everywhere, except parts of South Wales. Then the Cymri, another Celtic people, came across from the Cimbric Chersonese (Denmark), landed in Aberdeen, spread over Scotland as Picts, and, coming southward, were met by the tide of Saxon or (as the new lights prefer to call it), "English" invasion, and turned aside into Wales. What the round-skulled Gael had done to the short, long-skulled people who preceded him, the Saxon did to the Gael. He took his tilled land from him; in those days it was not much, nine-tenths of the island being forest and marsh; and he gave him no chance of settling near him, and bringing in some of the wild country. That was not done till later, when the monasteries (true agricultural colonies) set the example of making the desert smile. The conquered had nothing for it but to submit to slavery or to "move on." If he moved on with a lot of friends, he might settle down somewhere in Wales, or on the Cornish moors, or in the wild district called Cumbria (Cymri's Land), from Chester to the Solway. But there would generally be somebody to turn out; so, if he was alone or with a few, begging or robbing (the two were interchangeable) was his only resource.

Then the numbers of the wanderers would always be recruited from those who consented to remain in slavery. To be a slave under the best of masters must have been a trying change; and few masters were good, or mistresses either, in days when a lady thought nothing of having a girl flogged to death for dressing her hair badly. Many, therefore, would run away; become "flymas," that is, tramps, through whom the tramp nature has been perpetuated. Whether or not "race" was the cause, tramps were very numerous in Saxon times; else, why the stringent laws against them? Then, as now, they had a coaxing way with them; to wheedle

is from "wædlian," to beg. In summer, the woods gave them shelter and food; in winter, they often starved, despite benevolence, like that which Bede records of King Oswald who, feasting his Bishop at Easter, heard that a crowd of poor were sitting round the door. A silver dish had just been brought in, full of rare meats. "Take it," said Oswald, "give the food to the poor, and break up also the dish into little bits so that each may have one."

In King Edgar's Canons (drawn up by Dunstan), the true rule for fasting is laid down: "When one fasts, let the dishes that would have been eaten be all distributed to God's poor." The tithe, as yet only a voluntary charge, was divided into three parts: one for the church fabric; another for the poor and for strangers (of whom many were wandering monks); another for the priest.

Another cause which swelled the army of tramps was that when, on his death-bed, a master freed his slaves, they became the "men" (serfs) of his heir, instead of being able to go where and live under whom they pleased. Of course, if the heir were a hard man, there would be a stampede of his serfs, whose position, little above that of bondsmen, made the personal character of their master all-important. Alfred, in his will, not only enfranchised all his servants, but took care to secure to them the liberty of choice:

"I, in the name of the living God, bid that no man hinder them, either by demand of fee, or claim of debt, from choosing as lord whomsoever they will."

In contrast with this is Cnut's sister, Godwin's wife, who used to get hold of all the pretty Saxon girls she could and sell them as slaves into Denmark. She was outdone—if William of Malmesbury is to be believed—by the Thanes in general, who had anticipated the custom of the Kentucky slave-breeders.

The Norman Conquest, of course, largely swelled the ranks both of "valiant beggars"—practically robbers—and of really destitute folk. The Saxon sometimes killed his "theow," or sold him or her into foreign parts; the Norman method was to maim offenders. When the revolt against the Barons of those who sang

*Nos sumus homines comme ils sunt ;
Tex (tales) membres amus (habemus) que ils unt*
(we are men as well as they; like limbs we have, too, as they have) was crushed by the Conqueror's grandfather, hundreds of

peasants were blinded of one eye and had one hand cut off; others lost both eyes and both hands, and in that plight were hunted back to their villages.

The Normans brought over the custom with them. It was an easy way of carrying out a summary conviction, and, when every little Lord had his Court-Baron, in which most of them had power of life and death, convictions were generally summary. "Cripples from feudal wantonness," were added to the company of beggars; and their pitiful estate won them so much sympathy that sham-blind men soon began to trade on the compassionate and to bully the unprotected.* The sympathy was mostly from their own race. The Statute of Winchester (1285) complains that trial by jury had become a farce; "felons cannot be attainted by oath of jurors, which would rather suffer felonies done to strangers to pass without pain than to indite the offenders."

The Border wars added their contingent to the vagrant army. Families on both sides were rendered houseless, and driven on the tramp. Welsh and Scottish chiefs, ruined by inroads, were unable to keep open house, and so the petty bards, called in Wales "Beirdd Ysppyddaid" (small-beer poets), often wandered into England in search of food.

Then came the Black Death, killing off swarms of the wanderers, but afterwards recruiting them in an unexpected way; for the scarcity of labourers caused a rise in wages, which so disgusted the employers that they sought by the "Statute of Labourers" (1350), to fix a maximum.

"You shall work at a very little above the old wage," said the statute.

"No; they're giving three or four times as much in Craven or Stafford," replied the labourer, "so I'll run away."

"If you do," retorted the law, "when caught, you shall be put in prison for forty days, and sent back to where you came from."

The labourers were acting out the modern axiom of trying to sell in the dearest market; while the sudden rise in prices made it impossible for them to live on the old wages. It was a foolish statute every way—to imprison the men on

* Oldish Londoners may remember a legless cripple who used to work himself along on a little go-cart. A fourteenth-century manuscript has a picture of much the same kind of man, moving in much the same kind of way. This mediæval cripple had probably lost his legs for some breach of the Game Laws.

whose steady working the food of the nation depended.

Archbishop Islip was about right when he told Edward the Third to pay his debts and not waste his subjects' property in his "progresses." Of course, some who fled to evade the statute bettered themselves; but, doubtless, many sank into the ranks of the vagrants.

Then there were the minstrels—men of all ranks (young nobles among them)—who, for love of music and adventure, went on the tramp. In many a village the minstrel—the only courtly man who was seen from year's end to year's end—would win some girl's heart; and sometimes the connection would be permanent, and would result in a brood of young tramps, who would have no resource but the wandering life, perhaps without their father's talent.

Again, Robert Langland, in "Piers Plowman" (1362), says the law brought many to beggary:

"Law is so lordly and dilatory, that, without bribes, few can gain their ends. Faithful burghers she often bringeth to ruin."

But Piers distinguishes sharply between the deserving poor—then, as now, careful to hide their sufferings—and the beggars by profession." By the first, "bread and penny ale are taken as a treat, and on Fridays a farthing's worth of mussels or cockles were a feast. . . . True alms it were to help such, who are ashamed to beg, and would not have it known at their neighbours' houses what their wants are at noon and evening." The others, "vagabonds and draw-latches, beget children who are beggars by nature, and break the back or some bone of their little ones, so as to go begging with them ever after."

The labourer's reply to Edward the Third's statute was Wat Tiler's rising. He began to want freedom of action; Magna Charta had done nothing directly for him except protect his "wainage"—that is, husbandry implements—from seizure for fines to the King. But after Tiler's demonstration, landlords began to give leases and take money payments: modern tenancy dates from that time.

But Tiler's petition, though it touched classes that Magna Charta had never dealt with, did not deal with beggary.

Richard the Second, by the way, would have gladly used the people as a counterpoise against the nobles; but the nobles, with John of Gaunt at their head, forced his hand. The Statute of Labourers was

re-enacted and made more stringent: any servant travelling without a letter from his master could be put in the stocks and kept there till he found bail that he would go straight home. Labourers' children were not to be apprenticed to any trade, lest by living a year and a day in a town, they should acquire their freedom.

Now, too, we find edicts against scholar-beggars. These—called "chamber-dekyns," because at the University they lived five or six in a room—were very numerous. Learning, to men of simple birth, was the only avenue to power; many and wonderful had been the advancements of lowly-born Churchmen, and all learning belonged to the Church, and every "poor clerk" felt that he carried in his bundle the crosier of an Archbishop. Then there was the love of letters, specially innate in the Scot, whether of Ireland (Scotia major), or of Albany (Scotia minor); and there was, too, I am afraid, the desire of escaping from work of hand, which had a good deal of weight with many.

These poor scholars used to get "briefs" (*testimoniales sub sigillo officii*) from the Vice-Chancellor of their University, authorising them to beg their way home during the Long Vacation. There was nothing else for it. Oxford would not house them when Term was over; they had received their share of the "poor's pence" on Saint Scholastica's Day; they had pledged to the Proctor cloak, Venice knife, even the "Summulæ" or "Sentences," on which they relied for learning enough for their degree; so begging was their only resource, and begging under the University seal was held to be no disgrace. The well-disposed among them would get home as fast as they could, so as to make an honest penny by helping in the harvest; the laggards would be so taken with a beggar's life, that they would, perhaps, give up study altogether; and thus from another quarter the ranks of beggary would get filled.

A good many of these scholars were Irish. Ireland had been the home of learning, and thither English students used to throng; but the waste of war had destroyed the once famous Irish schools, and for the higher learning the descendants of those who alone during the very darkest ages had kept alive the knowledge of Greek had nothing for it but to go abroad. Being rivals they were not popular. "No Irish need apply," soon began to be enforced against them.

In 1413, "it is ordained that all Irishmen and begging Irish clerks be voided out of the realm upon pain to lose their goods and be imprisoned at the King's pleasure, except such as be Graduates in the Schools and Serjeants and Apprentices of the Law, and religious persons professed." In 1422 the same edict was re-enacted with special reference to "people born in Ireland and dwelling under the jurisdiction of the University of Oxford;" they were to go back within the month or lose their goods.

Henry the Eighth was more impartial. His wholesale hangings of "valiant beggars," and his laws against vagrancy have become proverbial; and severe treatment was needed, for the plague had grown to a great head. The disease demanded stern remedies, and these Henry supplied.

"Michers that live in truandise;" "hedge-creepers;" "flowches, who put soap in their mouths to make foam and fall down as if they had Saint Cornelius's evil;" "Newgate Nightingales who strut about pretending they have suffered shipwreck or have been in captivity in France;" "rufflers and rogers which say they are poor scholars of Oxford or Cambridge"—all these were to be sent home to work, after being "stripped naked from the waist upwards and sharply scourged, alike men and women." They had to take with them a "billet," signed by two justices certifying that the punishment had been inflicted. If caught a second time, they were to lose the upper part of the gristle of the right ear; for the third offence, death was the punishment.

The Act broke down, as over-harsh Acts are apt to do; for, besides the "mighty," or "sturdy," or "valiant" beggars, there was a vast mass of helpless misery; and, when the alms on which they had been kept alive were commuted for the churchwardens' gathering and dole, the really helpless fared very ill, and the charitable were constantly tempted to break the law. Things were made worse when first, the lesser monasteries (1536), and three years after, the greater, were suppressed. Hereby an income of one hundred and thirty-seven thousand pounds a year—equivalent to more than a million and a half—became mainly private property, instead of at least a third of it being spent in charity. Moreover of the fifty thousand dispossessed monks a good many sank into beggary, so that there were at once more beggars to be fed and less to feed them on; and hence the call for increased severity in the vagrancy laws.

Under Edward the Fifth these laws became fiercer still. Sir J. Cheke, Greek Professor at Cambridge, and Edward's tutor, is supposed to be answerable for the cruel statute of 1547. He was thinking of Lysurgus and Draco when he prescribed that every loiterer should be branded in the breast with V, and should be adjudged for two years as a slave to the person who "presents" him.

"He is to be fed on bread and water, or small drink and refuse meats. He is to be caused to work by beating, chaining, or otherwise, no matter how vile the work may be. If he runs away, his master may pursue him and punish him with chains and beating, and may bring him before two justices, to be branded with S on cheek or forehead. Anyone harbouring him shall pay ten pounds. Death as a felon is the penalty for the second running away."

Benefit of clergy was scarcely a mitigation in such cases. "Clerks, if entitled to benefit, are only to be slaves one year; if not entitled, they shall serve five years." In all else they fare like the rest.

"Infant beggars," under fourteen, may be forcibly taken and kept at work—boys, till twenty-four; girls, till twenty. Masters may let or sell such, and, if they run away, they become slaves for life. Of course the Act failed: Kett's rising was the answer to it among the sturdy East Anglians; a rising only crushed down by artillery and foreign mercenaries.

Cheke consoled himself by writing a book on "The Hurt of Sedicion," not seeing that the rapacity of the courtiers, who were squabbling for monastery lands across Edward's dying bed, and enclosing commons and turning little tillage farms into pasture, had been the main cause of this excess of misery. Small farmers, by hundreds, were forced into the ranks of beggary; there was no demand for them as labourers, for grass farms do not take many hands.

Elizabeth's edicts included tinkers; gipsies; and players of interludes—except those who wore some great man's livery; bear wards, too—in spite of the Queen's fondness for the sport; and minstrels, as being often propagators of sedition; besides "all bearers of tales and news."

Manx beggars, in addition to Irish, Scotch, and Welsh—are now first mentioned. Now, too, we first hear of Houses of Correction, and of beggars being sent thither at the cost of the nearest

town, and of that burning in the hand which lasted on the Statute Book till 1800.

London soon became plagued with an excess of beggars. The brick-kilns at Islington got to be one of their favourite haunts; and branding with an R, as big as an English shilling, was the legal punishment, besides whipping, of course. For the second offence, the penalty was death, without benefit of clergy; and, not only were neglectful constables fined, but "all persons who fail to apprehend rogues shall pay ten shillings." Those who could not be set to work were to be "banished to the New Found Lande, the East and West Indies, Germanie, Fraunce, Spayne, or the Lowe Countries."

People were ready to make a profit out of housing the London beggars. Here is a thorough case of "Tatteboy's Rents":

"In the 40th of Elizabeth, in the Star Chamber, her Mat^{ty} Attorney-general did enforme that Rice Griffin had unlawfully built a tenement in Hog Lane—now Worship Street—which hee divided into several rooms, wherein were living poore tenants that were maintained by begging abroad in other places; and that John Scrips had, in like sort, a tenement in Shorditch."

But country, as well as town, was afflicted with the epidemic. In Somerset, "the numbers" writes Edward Hext, a Justice of the Peace, "are infinite. They live mostly by sheep stealing, saying boldly that they will not starve, and, when I threaten them with the House of Correction, they confess a felony so as the rather to be sent to gaol."

We do not appear to have adopted the Dutch cure for inveterate beggars—a watertight compartment with a pump in it, and a tap high out of reach. In this the man was put, and the tap set running, so that he was obliged to pump to keep himself from being drowned. Whipping was the great English incentive to exertion; while sham soldiers and sailors were treated as felons, and even liable to be hanged. Two classes of vagrants excepted were "diseased poor travelling to Bath or Buxton," and "John Dutton's fiddlers in the county of Chester." This curious privilege dates from 1210, when the Welsh in great force besieged the Earl of Chester in Rhuddlan Castle. He sent word to his steward to collect troops, and raise the siege; who, coming into Chester at Midsummer Fair, and finding there a great mob of fiddlers and players, marched with them and

frightened off the Welsh, who took them for an army. Whereupon the Earl, by charter, gave the steward and his heirs "power over all the fiddlers and cobblers in Chester." Fiddlers used to take out a Dutton license. The last Licensing Court was held in 1753, but the statute was not repealed till 1822! Under James the First, along with re-enactment of the Vagrancy Act, and deportations to Virginia, came an issue of copper farthings—to supersede the lead tokens, "plumbeos Angliæ," of which Erasmus speaks.

Here and there a man took action without waiting for justices or constables. "One Mr. Harman, of Warwickshire, being pestered extreemly with sturdy beggars and wandering rogues, did take order that they should all be sent to his house, whom presently he set to work to gather stones off his grounds, and gave them some small releefe in meat and drink, and a penny a day, and held them hard at work (having lusty stout servants to see to them), and when he had made an end of gathering off his own grounds, he set them to work in his neighbours', and paid them their wages; which thing, when all the rest of the wandering beggars understood, they durst not one of them come a-begging in that parish, for fear they should be made to work. And for the younger sort of idle poor in his own parish, this was such a discipline for them, that they did betake themselves to honest labour, and so the true poor were very much the better relieved."

In 1628 was another plague of Irish beggars; they were "brought over seventy in a bark and landed secretly in the night"—just as they used to be during the great famine of 1846-7, the landlords paying half-a-crown a head to rid their estates of the "human vermin." Who paid the passage-money in 1628, I know not; that influx too was caused by famine, the Irish cattle having died and the corn having been bought up by British regraters. The wanderers got as far as Essex, where the Justices "crave direction how they may clear the country of so great a grievance." Those that did not "return to their own country and there abide," were to be "sent to the Plantations beyond the seas, there to be disposed in the usual way of servants for a term of seven years."

In 1662 was passed the Settlement Act, a supplement to the ineffectual Poor Law of 1601. It was a kind of serfdom over again, the labourer being strictly bound to his own parish, and was meant to stop the

wandering to which public opinion attributed the spread of the plague. It wholly failed! The poet Waller says: "The poor are hunted out like foxes, and whither must they go but to London, where there are houses!" In fact, "Rents" and "tenements" multiplied exceedingly, overseers themselves engaging in the business, and therefore failing to put the law in force.

Sir Matthew Hale (1670) protested against the folly of "leaving every parish to maintain its own poor only, instead of charging all upon the whole collectively;" pointing out how the beadle would catch a beggar and take him six houses off "into the next parish." He called for a distinction between such as could and should be made to work, and those helpless poor whom the decay of charity condemned to wretchedness.

In the same year the Lord Mayor suspected from the number of incendiary fires that the Great Fire was caused by beggars! Just then another cause increased the evil; not only were ruined courtiers, who sought in vain some help from the King, for whose father they had lost all, driven to beggary, but wasteful Charles never had money to pay his servants, and "many of the lower attendants about Court were, therefore, in extreme want."

All through the time of the Georges, stocks and whipping were in full play. In 1727 "end-gatherers" were classed among dangerous and incorrigible vagrants, liable to condign punishment. These people bought up ends of wefts, thrums, and short yarn, and other refuse, showing that shoddy is not such a modern invention after all. Defoe, writing under the name of "Andrew Moreton," on "Parochial Tyranny," declaims against workhouses, "which, in appearance beneficial, mix good and bad, and too often make reprobates of all alike. If an honest gentleman or trader leaves wife and children unprovided for, they must be mix't with vagrants, thieves, and nightwalkers."

Refusal of alms was often revenged by rick-burning. Boys used to pride themselves on this.

In 1734, a boy on trial said to a comrade who had escaped: "What a great man I am, Jack, to make such a bustle in the world, with jury, and judges, and sheriff! When will you come to such preferment, you little inconsiderable rascal, you?"

The laws against players were re-enacted in 1735 and the same year workhouses

were re-established in every county. The law of Settlement went on giving trouble. Moreover, it soon began to be a grievous expense. Returned paupers filled the carriers' waggons; and, after they had got their papers from the magistrates, they would bring out a lot of luggage, good clothes, bonnet-boxes, etc., and insist on these being carried.

With our own day came in "Refuges," "Homes," etc., "which," say the Secretaries of the Mendicity Society, "are demoralising; attracting vagrants to the towns." But modern mendicancy is a large subject.

Two things are certain: first, that any social change—Norman Conquest, Statute of Labourers, break-up of the monasteries, turning of small tillage farms into big sheep-walks, Border wars, ravagings of Ireland, Irish famines—has always multiplied the beggars, for it has inevitably caused distress to a class. Next that there is, besides these sufferers through economic changes, a "nation" of hereditary beggars ready to profit by the compassion called out by temporary distress. Everyone's aim should be to repress the latter, and to effectually help the former.

If anyone wants to trace the history of foreign beggary, or to go deeper into the subject as far as England is concerned, he will find Mr. Ribton Turner's book a very storehouse of facts.

ALL HALLOW E'EN.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

"OF course, if Monsieur objects, it cannot be; Monsieur is master here, and must be obeyed; but in old Madame's time it was always so. Still, if Monsieur objects——"

"Monsieur does object. He objects most emphatically, my good Angélique. Monsieur is not so young as he once was; and he has a wholesome dread of rheumatism and lumbago; and he has also a profound objection to sitting with open doors on a cold October night with a wind keen enough to take the skin off his face blowing across the hall."

"But, Monsieur, it is but for one hour," and Angélique's voice quivered, and her brown hands trembled with eagerness as she pleaded, "one little hour in the whole year that the poor souls are allowed to come back to earth again. Think! If it were Monsieur himself, and he were there

outside, cold and hungry, and longing to come back and to look once more on his old home and on those who loved him, and he came and found darkness and silence and the door closed against him, would he not think that he was forgotten? I know nothing of Monsieur's past life; but surely there must be someone whom he loved on earth, and who has passed from him into the unknown country, whose memory still lingers in his heart. Think, Monsieur Jack, if that dear one should come to-night!"

"Nonsense, Angélique."

Jack Melville laughed impatiently; but yet his face softened as he spoke, and, for an instant, his thoughts went back to the little fair-haired sister whom he had loved so passionately, and whom Death's cruel hand had snatched from him more than ten years ago.

"I thought you were too good a Catholic to harbour such heathenish fancies," he went on.

"Monsieur, it is not heathenish," and Angélique looked at him reprovably. "In our church we are permitted, as Monsieur knows, to pray for the dead."

"It is heathenish for all that, Angélique;" and Jack Melville threw himself back in his chair, and puffed lazily at his pipe. "Only a few months ago I was in a country a long, long way from England, where the people—I suppose you would call them heathens, for they worship the sun and fire, and do not bury their dead at all, but expose them on the top of a tower for the vultures and eagles to devour——"

"Monsters!"

Angélique shuddered and frowned; Jack laughed and elevated his eyebrows.

"Oh, I don't know. Not much choice between a vulture or a worm," he muttered. "Well, these monsters, as you call them, have just such a custom as you have described to me to-night. Once a year—I forget the day—they spread food and wine upon the table and throw open the doors of the house, that the spirits of their ancestors may enter in and eat and drink."

"Monsieur, heathens or not, it is a pious thought and worthy of a good Christian," Angélique replied gravely. "If Monsieur would but consider a moment!"

"The matter is not worth consideration, my good Angélique. Take all that!"—and he pointed towards a small table where Angélique had just placed a tray with a

decanter of wine, and a loaf of bread, a glass and plate—"to your own domains. Entertain there as many ghostly visitors, but, for Heaven's sake, shut the door and leave me in peace."

He took up his book as he said the last words, and began to read again, as a hint that the interview might be considered at an end. But Angélique did not move; she made no answer to the scoffing speech; but she stood by the table with her thin fingers twisting the strings of her apron nervously together, casting wistful glances at her master. He, looking up impatiently from his book by-and-by, thought what a picturesque figure the old woman looked in her white apron and high white cap, with her brown face and keen black eyes, and the silver ear-rings and cross on which the lamp-light was shining.

"Not gone yet, Angélique? Come, be a sensible woman and go to bed. It is almost midnight now," he said testily.

"Monsieur, I could not sleep. I too must keep my vigil," Angélique replied, piously crossing herself; "but I will not disturb Monsieur any longer. See, I will leave the bread and wine; perhaps," she looked at him wistfully, "Monsieur may change his mind after all. If so, he has but to spread the cloth upon the table; to place upon it the food and wine, and to open the doors."

"All right, Angélique. Good night!"

"Good night, Monsieur."

Angélique slowly and reluctantly left the room. Jack Melville laughed softly as the door closed behind the old woman, and, drawing his chair nearer to the fire, took up the poker and stirred the coals into a brighter blaze.

It was the night of the thirty-first of October; the one night in the year, when, according to an old superstition which still lingers in the North of England, and in Scotland, and also in Breton, the spirits of the dead are allowed, for one short hour, to revisit the earth; on this night, love-charms are most potent, and incantations most successful, for spirits both good and evil are abroad. On this night, to the maiden—if one can be found with strength and courage enough to brave the ordeal—who stands before her looking glass and eats an apple at the mystic midnight hour, there will appear the semblance of her future husband, and it will stand behind her and look over her shoulder into the glass, and take the apple from her hand. There are also other incantations of a milder and

less terrifying nature, which may be practised with impunity by youths and maidens in company, such as the burning of nuts, the placing of three vessels—one of which is empty, one containing foul and one pure water—before the fire, and which are conducive to great mirth and laughter. Jack Melville had often joined in these mystic rites in his younger days, and now, as he leant back in his chair and smoked a meditative pipe, he thought of them, and of the merry party which had gathered round the fire in the old Yorkshire farm-house years ago.

Where were they all? he wondered—those merry boys and girls who had cracked jokes and burned nuts together, in that far past. They had all passed out of his life long ago! Jack smoked his pipe, and meditated with an unusually thoughtful expression on his brown face. The hour and scene were favourable for meditation. The servants had all gone to bed; Angélique was shut up in her own room; and the great house was very still and silent—almost oppressively silent, Jack thought.

The room in which he sat was very large and lofty, with oak panelled walls, hung round with ancestral portraits. Heavy velvet curtains hung before the bay windows and the door, the fireplace was of carved wood, and a great brass brazier, in which a splendid fire was burning, stood on the tiled hearth. There was no gas, and the room was lighted partly by a handsome brass lamp, which hung from the centre of the ceiling, and partly by wax candles in curious brass candelabra which stood on the mantel-piece.

No one had been more surprised than Jack Melville himself, when, six months before on his return from his wanderings in the East, he found letters awaiting him at his club, which told him that a distant relation, whom he had almost forgotten, had died suddenly, and bequeathed to him her large estates and Melville Hall, a beautiful old house in West Yorkshire. He was very much delighted at the news, and at first charmed with his new home and his hospitable neighbours, but the monotonous country life—the state dinners, and the garden parties, and dances, which were given in his honour—bored and wearied him, and before three months had passed, he was thoroughly tired of it all, and was already beginning to cast back regretful thoughts to his old exciting life, and to long to set out on his travels again.

For the last ten years, ever since his little sister's death, he had led a wandering life, and now that the first novelty had worn away he found his new life very tame and monotonous, and was half inclined to wish sometimes that his riches had never come to him.

"I have led a nomadic life so long, that I fear I shall never settle down again properly," he said confidentially one day to Mrs. Wood, the wife of his next neighbour, and the happy mother of five marriageable daughters. "At my time of life—I was six-and-thirty last May—a man does not easily forget his old habits or learn new ones! I wasn't a rich man, far from it, but I had sufficient for my wants, and I am half inclined to wish sometimes that poor Mrs. Melville had selected another and a worthier heir—that girl who lived with her, for instance, my half-cousin, Winifred Wyverne."

"That would never have done, my dear Mr. Melville."

Mrs. Wood looked at him in mild surprise and shook her head. "Oh, never! Winnie is a dear girl, and we are all very fond of her—very fond—but she had no right to expect to inherit Melville Hall."

"I don't know that she expected anything of the kind," Jack said in his brusque way; "but she had lived there all her life, and it must have been a trial to leave the place. I should like to know her. Angélique says she is very pretty, and as sweet as she is pretty."

"Yes, there is something nice about her—not pretty exactly, but certainly something prepossessing," Mrs. Wood returned.

"Where is she now?"

"I don't know. She went to live with her married cousin, and I believe they are on the Continent at present. Winnie has a nice little income of her own, Mr. Melville. Your aunt left her ten thousand pounds."

"So I suppose. Travelling on the Continent, you say? A pleasant change after the dull life she must have led at Melville Hall," Jack said thoughtfully.

"Dull? Ah, I daresay you find it so. You must marry, Mr. Melville."

Mrs. Wood laid a fat white hand on Jack's arm, and smiled at him with an almost motherly affection in her placid eyes. "The Hall ought to have a mistress, and, with a nice wife to look after you, you will soon forget your restless impulses and settle down into a model country Squire."

Jack stroked his beard meditatively.

"Yes, that is the worst of it. I must marry, I suppose," he said in a tone of gentle resignation, and then whether by accident or design, his eyes rested on the second Miss Wood—a buxom, rosy-cheeked girl of three-and-twenty—who was standing at a little distance talking to the curate. Mrs. Wood noticed the meditative glance, and her heart beat with motherly pride and hope, hope which, alas! was doomed to remain unrealised, for, although Jack at times felt dull and lonely in his big house, no desire to enliven its gloom by the presence of a wife had, as yet, occurred to him. Marriage was in his opinion a necessary unavoidable evil which must be faced some day; but which at present he could afford to hold in abeyance!

As a rule his solitary evenings passed quickly and pleasantly enough. He was fond of reading, and there were many rare and curious books in the library, which were a source of unceasing pleasure to the new owner. But on this particular evening there seemed something almost oppressive in the silence. Even the clock on the mantel-piece ticked in an exasperatingly doleful tone, and seemed to have caught a touch of the pervading gloom. Outside the wind was rising, now and then a twig of the rose tree which wreathed the window would tap in a ghostly fashion against the pane, and the leaves of the beech trees on the lawn rustled eerily as the wind swept the branches to and fro. Jack was by no means an imaginative or superstitious man; but he was in an unusually thoughtful mood that night, and laugh though he might and did at Angélique's superstitious fancies, he could not forget them or her earnest words and manner.

While he mused the clock in the hall struck twelve in a solemn dignified way, which contrasted oddly with the hasty impetuosity with which the little clock on the mantel-piece hastened to follow its example. The silence seemed to grow more intense and eerie than ever, Jack thought, as the echo of the last deep stroke died away. All kinds of strange thoughts and fancies crowded into his mind as he sat and watched the glowing coals and listened to the sough of the wind amongst the trees, and the hundred strange mysterious sounds which anyone who watches late at night in an old house may hear. Jack seemed to hear all the sounds with which the readers of ghostly legends are familiar; the light footstep on the carpet; the rustle of a woman's dress; the low sigh; the

faint beating of hands against the window pane! Once he started and looked round, fancying that he heard his own name whispered in his ear in a soft familiar voice.

"I believe Angélique is right. The air is full of ghosts to-night," he said to himself with an impatient laugh, as he picked up the book which had fallen from his knees on to the hearth-rug. "I haven't felt so eerie and queer since I was a small boy listening with terrified delight to my nurse's ghost tales! Really"—and he laughed again and looked up at the portrait of a lady which was hanging over the mantel-piece—"I should not feel very much surprised if Dame Cicely up there were to step out of her frame and keep me company."

But although pretty Dame Cicely remained in her frame, and only smiled at him with her beautiful amused brown eyes, there were plenty of other ghosts who by-and-by came to share his vigil. They passed before his mental vision in a long, silent procession, and looked at him with their half-forgotten faces, and recalled old times and old days vividly to him. Father and mother dead and buried long ago; old friends of his youth, who might as well be dead also, so completely had they passed out of his life.

First amongst the crowd of spectres was Fred Leslie, the true and faithful friend, who had wandered with him in strange places; who had shared his perils and adventures; had died clasping his hand and with his head upon his breast; whose grave he had dug in that lonely Eastern desert. From his dead friend, Jack's thoughts turned naturally to the little sister to whom he had been, during her short span of life, both father and brother, and who had loved him and whom he had loved so well. Even now, though ten years had passed since her death, Jack felt his eyes grow dim and misty as he thought over her farewell words:

"I shan't forget you, Jack," she had said in her sweet, faint voice; "I shall love you, and think of you always. Living or dead, I shall remember you, dear, and, if I can, I will come back and watch over you, and take care of you, Jack; for you will be so lonely without me, my poor boy!" she had said, and then she had kissed him and fallen into a quiet sleep; and in her sleep the great Death Angel had lifted her in his arms and carried her through the gate into the Eternal City.

Jack, recalling those parting words, and that summer evening long ago, felt his heart swell with love and sorrow. All at once a strange awe crept over him. What, if after all, there was some truth in old Angélique's quaint belief, and if, for one short hour in the year, the souls of the dead were permitted to revisit the earth, to linger by their old homes, to look again unseen on those whom they had loved in the former life. What if it were true? If on this night little Mildred should come back and find closed windows, and barred doors, and no welcome ready!

Jack started; a thrill of superstitious awe shot through his heart as the weird thought occurred to him. What if Mildred was out in the cold and darkness; if it were her hands that only a few minutes before he had heard—or fancied he heard—beating against the window-pane! He sprang suddenly from his seat, compelled by an uncontrollable impulse which he could not understand or fight against. He took the cloth and spread it on the table with hands that trembled with eagerness; he placed upon it bread and wine, a glass and plate. Then he crossed the room, passed with swift, noiseless steps through the great hall, dimly lighted by the faint glow of a dying fire, and, lifting the heavy oaken bar which secured the door, flung it wide open, and peered out into the darkness, half hoping, half dreading to see some spectral figure waiting for admission there.

A violent gust of wind went past him as he stood on the steps. It flung the dining-room door more widely open, swept the velvet curtain aside, swung the brass lamp to and fro, and blew out the light. The rush of cool air upon his heated forehead recalled Jack's scattered senses, and swept away his superstitious terrors. He felt half angry, half amused at himself for his folly, and with an impatient laugh he turned to re-enter the hall.

"Well, there's no fool like an old fool," he said to himself with a shrug of his broad shoulders. "To think that I, of all men, should give way to such superstitious nonsense, should be as foolish as old Angélique herself."

But although he laughed, he did not close the door; he stumbled across the hall, and entered the dim dining-room where the lamp was still swaying to and fro, and the candles on the mantel-piece gave a faint light, which only served to make the surrounding gloom more visible.

Jack did not relight the lamp; already the hands of the clock pointed to half-past twelve; in one short half-hour his vigil would be ended, and it was scarcely worth while to light up for so short a time. So feeling half amused at, and half ashamed of himself, he leant back in his chair, and filled and lighted his pipe again. The dining-room was a long apartment, the fireplace was at one end, the door at the other immediately opposite; Jack, sitting in front of the fire, felt an unpleasantly cold draught blowing across his back from the open door, and he rose and drew his chair into a corner nearer the fire, and out of the draught. The wind was still rising, and it whistled in the chimney, and shrieked round the house, and drove a shower of leaves and gravel against the window; Jack lying comfortably back in his chair puffed at his pipe, and watched with lazy, half-closed eyes the velvet curtain which hung across the door. It was partially drawn aside, and was now swaying slowly backward and forward in the wind. Now and then as it moved Jack caught a glimpse of the dim hall, where the light of the dying fire was gleaming faintly on the rusty armour which hung upon the walls—shields, and swords, and bucklers, which Jack's ancestors had worthily worn in many a hard fight, which were rusty now with age and disuse, and useless as the arms that had wielded them!

As Jack watched the swaying curtain with dreamy eyes, he became suddenly conscious of a shadowy figure moving in the darkness beyond. It came across the dark hall; a white ghostly figure, walking slowly, and with an odd, gliding motion. It crossed the hall, it paused a moment by the open door, it laid a white hand on the curtain, and, pushing it gently aside, entered the room!

Jack started violently. His pipe slipped unheeded from his lips and fell upon the hearth, as with a stifled exclamation he raised himself from his half-recumbent position, and stared at his strange visitor. Again the wave of superstitious awe swept over him. It chilled the very blood in his veins, it paralysed his energies, and kept him rooted where he stood, unable to move or speak, or do anything but gaze at the white shadowy figure at the further end of the room. It was too dark to distinguish the features, but he saw that it was a woman's figure; that she was tall and slight, and was wrapped in a loose white robe, which was tied

round her waist by a crimson cord; and that her hair, which streamed over her shoulders to her waist and veiled her face from his view, was very long and thick, and of a bright golden colour, very much the colour of the curl of hair which he wore in the locket which always hung at his watch-chain! Jack's heart stood still at the thought, he longed to see her face more clearly, and he tried to rise from his chair, but some unseen influence held him back.

Swiftly and noiselessly the shadowy figure crossed the dimly-lighted room. She did not glance at Jack, or seem in any way to be conscious of his presence; but she paused beside the table. Slowly she raised the decanter from the table; she poured the wine into the glass; she raised it to her lips and drank; she broke the bread and ate. Jack, from his chair in the corner, looked on with incredulous, wondering eyes at the strange sight. At that moment it seemed to him, in his excited mood, as if he were assisting at some unearthly feast; some banquet of the dead upon which, by some strange chance, he was permitted to gaze; which, however, he might not share! For quite five minutes the figure lingered by the table, then, turning slowly, crossed the room again, passed behind the curtain into the hall, and disappeared in the gloom.

For a moment or two Jack sat bending forward in his chair, gazing with straining eyes into the darkness. He tried to speak, to call out; but his tongue was dry and parched, and refused to do its office. Great drops of perspiration gathered on his brow, and he was shaking from head to foot with nervous agitation. By-and-by, with a great effort, he roused himself from his strange lethargy; he ran into the hall, stumbling in his haste over the mat which lay at the door, and flinging a heavy chair to the ground. The loud sound echoed through the silent house, and startled Angélique, who was still keeping vigil in the housekeeper's room. She came to ascertain the cause, and found her master standing on the hall steps, gazing eagerly out into the darkness. He started violently as she touched his arm, and shrank back from her. Then, as he turned and saw by the light of the candle she carried in her hand, that it was a real and not a visionary being this time who had come to disturb his solitude, he gave an agitated laugh.

"Angélique, did you see her as well—that woman? It was not my fancy only," he cried.

Angélique looked at him gravely.

"Monsieur, I saw nothing. I have but this moment entered the hall; there is no one here," she added, and she raised her candle and peered round into the dimness. "Has Monsieur then seen," she sank her voice to a whisper, "some—spirit?"

"Spirit! Nonsense."

Jack's self-possession, which had been sorely shaken by the incident of the last few minutes, was already rapidly returning, and he felt half inclined to laugh now at his folly. "Some woman came, indeed; she was tall and alight, with golden hair; it must have been one of the maids."

"There is no maid in the house who answers to Monsieur's description; both the maids are dark, and are in bed and asleep, long ago," Angélique replied. "Monsieur then saw—someone?"

"Yes."

Jack shut the hall-door with a somewhat vicious bang, and, replacing the bar, led the way across the hall into the dining-room; Angélique followed in silence. There was an air of terrified triumph on her face as she looked at the broken bread, the few drops of wine which still remained in the glass. She pointed to them with an almost tragic gesture.

"Does not Monsieur believe now?" she said.

Jack frowned impatiently.

"Monsieur is as far from belief as ever, Angélique! Someone came, it is true, and ate and drank; but, as the hall-door was standing wide open, and any passer-by who chose might enter, there is nothing so very wonderful in that."

"Who would be likely to pass at this hour, Monsieur?"

"I don't know."

Jack poured out a glass of wine and drank it hastily. "Someone came, it is true, that is all I know; but as to it being a spirit, that is simply nonsense," he added. He tried to speak in his usual manner, but there was an excited thrill in his voice, and his heart beat fast and furiously. The triumphant look deepened in Angélique's eyes as she regarded him intently.

"Did the—person resemble anyone whom Monsieur once knew in this life, who has left him?" she asked.

Jack hesitated, and the colour flushed into his face.

"It was so dark; I could not see her

face distinctly, but," again he hesitated, "her hair was—was like my little sister's hair," he added, and his voice grew very soft and tender. As he spoke, the clock in the hall struck one, Jack laughed and turned away from Angélique's penetrating gaze. "See, the witching hour is past, let us go to bed, Angélique," he said. "Perhaps, in the morning, the mystery may be explained."

The consciousness that one has made a fool of oneself is never, at any time, no matter how frequent the experience, a very pleasant or cheerful one, or one calculated to raise the spirits, or conducive to good temper and self-satisfaction. It was not surprising, then, that Jack Melville, who considered himself, and was considered by his friends, an unusually sapient and wide-awake young man, should not look back with much satisfaction next morning over his adventure of the previous night, and the mystery which surrounded it. If he had felt half ashamed of his superstitious fears then, he felt doubly so when he awoke and found the sun shining and the robins singing, and listened to the merry stave which the gardener's boy was whistling below his bed-room window. The storm had passed, but traces of its strength still remained in the stripped, bare boughs of the elm and beech trees, which yesterday were brilliant with their autumn garment of gorgeously tinted leaves; in a great bough which had been torn from the beech tree, and flung across the path; and in the sodden leaves which covered the lawn.

"Perhaps my mysterious visitor may also have left some trace of her presence," Jack thought grimly, as he brushed his hair before the glass. "Cinderella dropped her slipper; but I don't think the young woman last night wore any slippers at all. I have an impression that I saw her little bare feet peeping from underneath her dress. I wish I had spoken to her, or followed her; I can't think why I didn't, or how I came to make such an ass of myself!"

Old Angélique's sympathetic glance as she met him in the hall, and the tender anxiety with which she enquired if Monsieur had slept well, did not tend to soothe his ruffled feelings.

"Slept well? Of course I did—never better," he answered testily.

Which assertion was far from being the truth; for Jack had lain awake the greater part of the night thinking over his strange

experience, and it was far into morning before, at last, he dropped into an uneasy sleep. But it was not likely that he would confess this to Angélique. He called her into the dining-room after his breakfast was over, and told her that he had quite determined to unravel the mystery and discover the identity of his strange visitor.

"As to her being a ghost, my good Angélique, that is simply nonsense," he said sharply, as Angélique listened and shook her head and looked at him, with eyes full of mild reproof, "utter nonsense. Some one or other has played a trick upon us. We must discover who that person is. One of the servants, most probably."

"Monsieur may enquire, but he will know no more than he does now," Angélique replied gravely. "Better not trouble, Monsieur. It is not wise to pry too closely into hidden mysteries. Let it rest."

But Jack declined to take the well-meant advice. He questioned the servants, he made enquiries at the lodge, he searched the garden; all in vain. The visitor had left no trace. The servants had seen and heard nothing; they were all in bed and asleep at the time. The lodge-keeper had locked the gates soon after nine o'clock, and it was impossible that anyone could have entered that way. Jack did not care to prosecute his enquiries outside his own household, or to acknowledge that he had been foolish enough to allow the apparition—if apparition it was—for he was half inclined to think, sometimes, that Angélique was right—to come and go unquestioned. It was a mystery, and a mystery it seemed destined, to all appearance, to remain.

A BALL IN ALGIERS.

"THE Governor's Ball; the last and most brilliant of the season." "The invitations were issued a month ago; not a chance of a ticket now." "Dear, dear, what a pity; and all the Sheikhs are to be there in native costume! The last ball, too!"

Such were the exclamations which greeted me as I landed in Algiers; but, to the astonishment of my friends and relations, I listened to them with stoic indifference. Last ball, indeed! Little I cared for balls, after being tossed about for the whole night, as one can be tossed only between

Marseilles and Algiers. There evidently exists some ancient myth, to which the shipping companies attach implicit faith, that the Mediterranean is always of a pond-like serenity, for the boats appointed for the Algerine service twirl and twist, heave and toss, in the wildest manner at the slightest breeze; and that night the wind had blown a hurricane. To speak of balls at such a moment was unseemly.

A few hours later, however, my views had changed; and keen was my grief to find that, whilst the whole world was going to this ball, I, like Cinderella, must stay humbly at home. But where there's a will, there's a way; some half-dozen hours of arduous exertion brought reward, and nine o'clock found me the happy possessor of the much coveted invitation, ready to start for the ball.

Until that moment I had had neither eyes nor thought for Algiers; and it was not until we were driving up the Mustapha Hill, to the old Moorish Palace where the French Governor lives, that I noticed the wonderful beauty of the town and its surroundings. Algiers stands on the curved shores of a little bay; the old part of the town, where tall, dark houses are clustered together, is built close down to the sea. Some quarter of a mile inland, a hill rises in a gentle, undulating curve, which seems subtly to harmonise with the form of the shore. On the side of this hill, palaces, villas, churches, mosques, and every variety of building, stand side by side, forming a picturesque, if incongruous group. Some of the houses, white bijoudwellings, covered with wisteria and honeysuckle, might have been transplanted straight from the Champs Elysées, so modern are they in their elegant prettiness; but others, dark, gloomy, flat-roofed, bring back the memory of the days when the Moors reigned supreme in the land. As the carriage made its way up the hill-side through the olive groves, the dark leaves of the foliage stood out with strange, distinct beauty against the clear azure of the sky; whilst, from time to time, we came across orange trees laden with golden fruit, and peach trees clothed in delicate blossom. The evening was lovely, the air charged with that subtle perfume which seems to give life and hope to those who breathe it.

The Mustapha Palace, which stands at the very top of the hill, is built in the Moorish style around a square court. Verandahs, covered with the most exquisite

carving, surround the building, which is of white stone inlaid with slabs of coloured marble. In the centre of the courtyard is a great fountain which, with its splashing waters, seems to keep the air cool on the hottest day. The palace is in the midst of beautiful gardens, full of exquisite tropical flowers and shrubs radiant with colour, fragrant with perfumes; and yet, in spite of all its brilliant loveliness, the impression which the Mustapha, even on the brightest day, produces, is depressing.

On the night of the ball, when every room was full of life and gaiety; when, in the grounds, the trees were all brilliant with lights, even then the palace seemed unable to shake off its sinister aspect; as if the memory of the old pirate days, when not a week passed but some Algerine chief returned home laden with the rich booty taken from some helpless merchant ship, and often enough driving before him its crew as slaves, still clung to the palace. Even the stream of guests—gay Parisiennes, mantillaed Spaniards, and white-robed English girls—failed to drive away the ghosts of the past.

About a hundred Sheikhs attended the ball; most of them wore the longscarlet cloak which showed that they held office under the French Government. Still, there were some few independent chiefs, in loose flowing garments of white, crimson, or artistic green, glittering with jewels and orders—*La République Française* has scattered these latter with a generous hand on the conquered race—and strangely handsome they looked in their brilliant attire, with their delicately-cut features and high-bred air. By their side Europeans appeared the veriest plebeians: their every movement and gesture replete with stately dignity, softened with picturesque grace. The absolute stillness of the faces of these Sheikhs, the intense calmness of their expression, is in itself almost terrible. Intuitively you feel, as you watch them, that it is the calmness of a volcano, under which the lava is raging.

Many of the Sheikhs never entered the ball-room, but sat the whole evening in a row, like statues in the corridor. As the European ladies, in their sleeveless, low-cut dresses, swept up and down before them, a sneer would appear from time to time on the lips of some old chieftain, and, although it was gone in a moment, and their faces would assume their usual expression of stony indifference, yet they contrived to convey to us all very forcibly

the impression that they considered the presence of such scantily-clad dames polluted the palace of their old Dey. The valuing, too, excited no small amount of scorn, though, I think, it fell more upon the husbands than the wives. I suppose they thought it but natural that the women should love to indulge in such frivolity; but that their husbands should allow them to do so was quite incomprehensible to the Arab.

At that ball, as during the whole of my stay in Algeria, nothing astonished me more than the evident contempt entertained by the conquered for their conquerors; but they seem inclined to make no effort to throw off the yoke. It is, as if they felt that they were conquered, not by the French, but by some inevitable Fate, to whose decree they must bow with unquestioning submission. On the other hand, the efforts which the French make to conciliate the Arabs are almost abject in the fervour of their humility. That evening, if one of the Sheikhs condescended to stroll into the ball-room, half a dozen official personages advanced to bid him welcome: the Governor and his wife overwhelmed him with attention; and a special officer was told off to walk by his side and give him any information he might require. If this were done in the hope of exciting gratitude, it was labour in vain; the Sheikh received the advances of his entertainers with stately courtesy, but evidently regarded all homage as his just due.

Nor is it only in the Palace that this extraordinary inversion of the usual relationship between the conquered and the conquerors exists; in the streets, public assemblies, everywhere, the same efforts are made by the French officials to avoid all cause of offence. The gendarmes and the soldiers are literally hidden away in dark nooks and caves, lest their presence should wound the susceptibilities of the native race; and, on the few occasions when they must necessarily be brought to the fore, apparently they receive private instructions that the Arabs are not to be subjected to any of those petty tyrannies which it so delights the soul of a French official to practise on his own countrymen. An amusing instance of this occurred at the Algiers races, a few days after the ball. A part of the ground near the Grand Stand was surrounded by a red cord, as a sign that the public was excluded. Through some misunderstanding, a motley crowd of Europeans broke down the red cord and crowded

into the reserved space. The gendarmes, bristling with fury, rode into their midst, and, striking right and left with perfectly unnecessary violence, drove the people away. Some half-hour later, the same thing occurred; again the red cord fell, and a crowd took possession of the reserved ground; but, this time, the crowd was Arab, evidently of the poorest class, but still Arab. I expected a repetition of the former scene; but, to my astonishment, one gendarme looked at another, he made a sign to a third, who looked for directions to a fourth; but no one ventured to address the intruders.

At length some official of importance was sent for, and after considerable delay, hesitation, and consultation, this person did summon sufficient courage to ride up to the enclosure; but, far from there being any signs of the violence and abuse to which the Europeans had been subjected, he bowed to the Arabs as if they were Sovereign Princes and he the most lowly of their subjects. In the blandest of tones he apologised for disturbing them, and entered into the most elaborate explanation of the why and wherefore of the case; but all his prayers and entreaties were in vain. The Arabs listened to what he said with a courtesy equal to his own; the stolid gravity of their faces never relaxed; but move they would not, and did not; and at length the officer rode away with a gesture of despair, and gave orders that they were to be left in possession of the ground!

It is the same in the Law Courts; it is almost impossible, even on the clearest evidence, for an European to obtain a decree in the open Court against an Arab.

Algeria is truly the land of incongruities and anachronisms. You may see a fine patriarchal old man, whose flowing beard and awe-inspiring aspect recall the days of Abraham, playing dominoes with all the dignity of an Eastern despot; or greedily devouring the Paris "Petit Journal," holding in his hand the while a flimsy little Birmingham purse; or a handsome boy, whose bearing you would swear showed unmistakeable signs of Royal descent, will approach you with a nonchalant air, and crave permission to black your boots!

The lives the women lead in Algiers, particularly if they are young and pretty, are simply terrible. When about fourteen, an Algerine girl is married—or rather sold, for it is scarcely more than a money transaction—to a man whom she has probably

never seen, but who, from that moment, possesses absolute authority over her. If she belongs to the higher classes, she is usually restricted, even in her husband's house, to one or two rooms. "If she were allowed to wander up and down stairs, she might meet a man," the husband says. The windows of the rooms into which she may go, always look into a courtyard, not a public street, but for all that, they are carefully covered with lattice-work, so that she may have no chance of holding communications with the outside world. The only amusement she is allowed to indulge in is a weekly visit to the cemetery, where she is supposed to go to mourn for the dead. This mourning, I must confess, is performed in a manner peculiar to the country. On Fridays, all men having been carefully excluded, the Algerine ladies drive, closely veiled, to the cemetery. Once inside the gates, they throw aside their veils, and seating themselves upon the tomb-stones, prepare to make a day of it. They always go provided with a substantial luncheon, and they spend the whole day laughing, chatting, and gossiping with their fellow-mourners. At sunset, they resume their veils, mount into their carriages, and are driven back to their homes, which they will not quit until the following Friday.

The most painful part of the fate of these women is, that, although they may fulfil every duty of their position with the most perfect exactitude, and may even love their husbands tenderly, the law allows them to have no legal claim upon them. At any time of the day or night, if a man be wearied of his wife, or for any reason desirous of being rid of her, he has only to lead her to the door, and by pronouncing the simple words, "you are divorced," he is free from her for ever.

Perhaps the most attractive objects in Algiers are the children. The market, held at sunrise, is one of the prettiest sights in life, for the little Arabs congregate by hundreds, nay thousands. Some of them are exquisitely beautiful; their features are perfect; their colouring, just that delicate shade of brown, tinged in the cheeks with rich crimson, which Andrea del Sarto so loved to paint—his infant Baptist was surely an Arab. Their hair, too, is of the finest silk, and each hair seems to form a separate ring, the whole one mass of tiny curls, fitting tight around their head. But, perhaps, the greatest beauty lies in their eyes; large, almond-shaped, of the darkest

brown or black, with an expression that is marvellous, it is so innocent, so tender. These little Arab beggars, who from their babyhood have been familiar with every form of wickedness, look like little sun-burnt angels who could not do wrong if they tried. They glide up to you in the most confiding way, smiling up into your face with tender innocence; but, alas! for human nature, instead of the angelic sentiments you expect to hear them express, generally a soft cooing little voice murmurs coaxingly: "Donnez moi un sou, s'il vous plait"—and they get it, too, for no heart could resist such pleading.

"CLOSER THAN A BROTHER."

By G. B. STUART.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER VII. A MOONLIGHT DRIVE.

NOTHING surprises a man more than the celerity with which a woman puts some sudden whim in execution; John Bulteel and Arthur Twisden were both astonished when May joined them at the steps, and announced her intention of accompanying them to Barkham. John had already taken his place, and was gathering up the reins; Arthur had not yet lighted his cigar to his satisfaction, and was anxiously sheltering himself and it behind a pillar of the doorway for that purpose; by the time it was alight, May had mounted to the front seat beside her brother, and Mr. Twisden jumped up behind.

"You don't mind my smoke, May?"

"It is not coming my way, thank you," Miss Bulteel answered; but she did not seem to want to talk, and Mr. Twisden relapsed into silence and the enjoyment of the excellent cigar which his host had given him.

John himself was smoking a pipe; he took it out of his mouth as the horse eased a little going up-hill, and knocked it out on the edge of the wheel, putting it into his pocket.

"Why did you do that? You needn't on my account," May said quickly. She hated to think that John was more polite than Arthur.

"Oh, I can't smoke and drive too."

"What nonsense! You had no difficulty in doing both yesterday, when I met you driving up from the station."

"I was not driving a lady then."

"That has nothing to do with it, if the

lady is your sister and does not mind smoke."

John answered nothing.

"Do you hear? Light your pipe again this minute. I like smoke."

"Then you oughtn't to."

"What?" May in pure astonishment turned her wide-open grey eyes full upon him. "Why not, I should like to know? Where have you got these fine notions of what a lady should or should not like?"

"I beg your pardon," John said humbly. "I did not mean to offend you, and I have picked up no opinions that I know of; only I can't help feeling that tobacco smoke which hangs about the dress and hair, which would scent that fur-cloak of yours for a fortnight, and take a day or so even to brush out of your fringe, is not in keeping with a young lady's surroundings. If you are obliged to put up with it, that is one thing; but where it can be avoided, that is another."

"But you don't mind it on your own clothes."

"Of course not; I am not a lady!" It was John's turn to stare at his sister now with those blue eyes of his, which always seemed to her so oddly placed in his rough face.

"You are very fastidious; I should have thought that Australian life would have taught you to admire the practical value of a woman who didn't mind a little tobacco smoke. You could not have had many of the other sort on your sheep-run, I should think."

"We never had any lady of any sort at Wambo in our time; perhaps that was partly the reason why we idealised women more than seems to be the fashion in England."

"I regret deeply that I do not come up to the Wambo Ideal," May replied pertly.

Meanwhile Twisden, on the back seat, folded the rug comfortably about his knees and concluded that the Bulteels were "making it up."

"Best not interfere," he said to himself, turning his shoulder to the couple in front and flicking his cigar-ash over the side of the dog-cart. "It's extraordinary how little Bulteel knows of women and their ways! Why, a few speeches—moderately civil speeches, of course—about the old Squire, whose bark after all was worse than his bite, and a compliment or two thrown in on her own capability, would have made May his staunchest supporter. Want of tact, Bulteel, is at the root of all

quarrels, certainly of all family quarrels, in the world. Yet I can't help hoping May has come out to-night with the intention of knocking under or asking forgiveness in some measure. It wasn't like her to volunteer her company in that way for no reason at all. How I should like to give Bulteel a hint that, if she does, he had better not cry "mea culpa," too, but take her with a high hand, forgive her conditionally and after some entreaty, and go up in her estimation for ever. Ah, my dear little girl, if you ever come into the hands of Arthur Twisden, 'to have and to hold,' you will have to learn once for all who is to be master! Hold hard, Bulteel, that is the 'Queen's' to the left; you can put me down at the private door."

As John and May drove back from Barkham, after parting with Twisden, the wide country view lay mapped out before them in the white light of a full moon. Every tree, and road, and church spire for miles round stood out as distinctly as in broad daylight, only the colours were black and white, instead of golden, and green, and blue.

"It was full moon when I left Wambo," said John, more to himself than to his sister.

"I wonder you ever left. I am sure you have regretted it ever since," she answered unexpectedly. Though her words were not very warm, her voice betrayed a slight accession of interest, to which John's nature responded immediately.

"Sometimes I am sorry I did; but I could not have stayed on. I told you, did I not, that my partner was murdered there?"

"No! Murdered? By whom?"

"By black fellows—aborigines, you know—who are always prowling about new stations, and consider any white man their legitimate prey."

"Were you with him?"

"Do you think he would have been killed if I had been with him? No; he was alone, and ill, and fell asleep under a tree, where he was watering his horse—at least, so we supposed. We buried him there, and I came away the next day."

"Had you received Mr. Taper's letter before his death?"

"Just before."

"And you would not have come back to Bulteel, except for this man's death?"

"No; I should not have left Wambo as long as he remained with me."

"What an odd man you are, John! You would have given up Bulteel and all

your prospects, and everyone you cared for, to stop in a wild place full of murderous natives with a man whom you had picked up——"

"Hush! you forget I cared for him."

"I don't even know his name."

"His name was John Bell."

"And you really loved him enough to stay by him there, and turn your back on all the world beside?"

"I loved him as a brother: closer, indeed, than a brother!"

"No wonder, then, you managed to do without your legitimate relations," said May, but not in her usual mocking tone, rather as if this little story which John had told her gave her some clue to his character.

Then, as the dog-cart turned in at the lodge-gate, May said hurriedly: "I am sorry for what I said this afternoon, John, about the timber in the park. Arthur was telling me of your intention of employing the old man on the work, and I think it is a very good idea. I hope you will set them at it at once."

"So you believed Twisden's word?"

They had pulled up at the hall door, and George had come to the mare's head at the sound of wheels. John jumped down on the wrong side of the cart and came round to help his sister before she could extricate herself from her rug. She made no answer to his last observation, and they entered the house side by side.

"Good night," May said, holding out her hand in more friendly fashion than she had yet shown since her brother's return. "I have liked my drive, and—and—I hope you will have your smoke now."

"Good night;" and John, bending his black head, kissed her hand. May was so surprised that she forgot to be furious.

CHAPTER VIII. A KISS.

WHAT a very long day it had been! May stood before her dressing-table combing out her long yellow plaits, and thinking back to the events of the afternoon. So much had happened since she had discussed the advisability of leaving Bulteel and setting up a private establishment, with her stepmother in the boudoir, not more than six or seven hours ago. How often had she had to acknowledge herself in the wrong to John Bulteel! How many times had her conscience told her that her brother's nature was nobler than she had expected to find it—nobler, perhaps, than her

own! And the pleasure she had looked for in Arthur Twisden's visit had all been swallowed up in this uncomfortable new excitement, this kind of unacknowledged struggle of characters in which she felt herself to have been decidedly worsted. In her intercourse with Arthur, there was nothing new to discover; in her association with John, every hour brought to light something which piqued, or puzzled, or vexed her.

And here, for some whimsical reason, there flashed across Miss Bulteel's mind the recollection of her writing-table, piled with books and papers, standing unlocked in the boudoir, a prey to the inquisitive fingers of any housemaid who should take upon herself to dust it. She had left it so when the discussion with her stepmother had given her thoughts a fresh direction, and had sent her out through the woods to Mark's End to cool them. May had been busily engaged upon her Italian: a task she had imposed upon herself at Christmas time, when her days of mourning were very long and heavy.

Arthur Twisden had suggested the idea; but John, speaking one day of a girl's education, had taken for granted that she must know French, and German, and Italian equally well, and the consciousness of considerable ignorance goaded her to closer study than even Arthur's kindly interest had done. There were her dictionaries and her notes, her translations and rough copies, lying in a heap on the writing-table for any prying eyes to investigate. At the bare thought she twisted her tail of yellow hair into a hurried knot, threw on her scarlet dressing-gown, and ran stealthily down the great staircase and along the passage which led to the boudoir. Eleven o'clock boomed from the stable clock as she opened the door of the little morning-room. John, at the farther end of the corresponding passage, which ran out like the other arm of the house and ended with the smoking-room, saw her figure for an instant against a background of fierce flame; then a great rush of smoke followed, and May, with all her might, pulled the door to again, and fell back panting against the wall. The boudoir was on fire! In an instant John was at her side.

"Run to the hall and pull the stable bell as quick as you can. George can't be in bed yet. I will call up Dennis. You did right to shut the door; it hasn't spread yet. Does anyone sleep above?"

"No one; it is the spare dressing-room."

"That's all right. You had better tell Mrs. Bulteel, and keep her away. What is it, May?"

"Oh, John, father's picture and mother's, the only one we have of her—the little water colours over the writing-table."

"All right; run and ring for George and call Dennis; send them round to the windows and let someone get the garden hose."

"John! you are not going in there!"

But John had unbuttoned his shooting coat and had wrapped it about his head and neck.

"Stand back," he said quietly, turning the door-handle as he spoke. "If you want to help, get George and Dennis as I told you;" and a moment after she was alone, for her brother had entered the burning boudoir and had shut the door between them.

May Bulteel never knew how she roused the household. Bennett, the bailiff, had already caught sight of the flames darting from the windows of the boudoir, and half-a-dozen gardeners were dragging up the watering machine and the hose, while fortunately the fountain, hard by, afforded plenty of water; there was no fire-engine nearer than Barkham. A steady stream was quickly brought to bear upon the garden side of the room, where the light wooden framework of the windows and the muslin draperies inside had attracted the worst of the fire; the room projected into the garden with bay windows, and the red flames ran along the slight outer wall, and licked the ledges and sills with appreciative zest, as if just playing with them before beginning the real work of the evening, the destruction of the inside walls. And so, as the long string of men outside worked with a will, passing the buckets and pumping the hose untiringly, the murderous red tongues found themselves outwitted, and a drenched black ruin showed in the white moonlight where the pretty little room with its long French windows had stood. It was all over in a few minutes, for though there had been considerable flare and flame, the fire had not had time to take hold of any place whence it was difficult to dislodge it.

"Thank you all very heartily, my men," said John Bulteel's voice. "I think it is pretty well got under now, all thanks to your promptness and goodwill. Bennett, send them round two or three at a time to get some refreshment in the kitchen, and keep an account of all who have been

helping to-night, that they may have some proper recognition of their services. You managed that attack on the windows admirably; I never saw anything more systematic, or better kept up. We can go in now by the door; I don't believe there is a spark left."

"Law, Sir, where were you then? We thought—Good Heaven, Mr. Bulteel, what have you done to your arm?"

"Burnt it a bit."

"You weren't helping, sir?"

"No, indeed, I was hindering. I was in the boudoir, and opening the door twice made a draught which considerably increased the fire."

"I beg your pardon, sir; but whatever induced you to risk your life in that fiery furnace, with the chance of the wall breaking in at any moment into the bargain?"

"I was saving some valuables," said John Bulteel.

Presently the housekeeper dressed her master's arm, but temporarily, for Dennis had had the good sense to send down to the village for the doctor on seeing the extent of the burns, and John came back into the big hall, and stopped for an instant to pour himself out a tumbler of whisky and water at a side-table; the pain he had gone through was worse than he would have willingly admitted.

There was a fluttering at the head of the staircase, and Mrs. Bulteel's pretty faded face, framed in a "negligée" of artistically arranged lace, peeped over the banister.

"I can't come down," she cried in her shrill treble, "but I want to thank you, dear John, for saving all our lives, and behaving so splendidly! No confusion, no excitement anywhere; just what your dear father would have done."

"You must thank Bennett and his men," John answered, gulping off his whisky, and setting the glass down with his left hand. "It is to them that we owe the safety of the house, and everyone in it. They were so quick and energetic."

"Anyhow, I'm sure you behaved like a hero, John," Mrs. Bulteel continued, unconvinced, nodding her head with a fascinating insistence, but keeping the rest of her person prudently out of sight, "you must tell me all about it in the morning. And are you quite sure that we may go to bed safely now, without any fear of the fire bursting out unexpectedly in some fresh part of the house?"

"Quite sure," John answered gruffly. "There won't be any more fire at Bulteel

to-night unless you start a fresh one, which looks very probable if you hold that candle so near your lace head-arrangement! Good night!" as Mrs. Bulteel retired, "I won't go to bed until I have made everything perfectly safe, you may be sure!"

"Good night, good night! I have every confidence in you!"

The shrill voice died away, and Mrs. Bulteel's bed-room door shut in the distance.

"John?"

"Well!"

"Are you much hurt?"

"No; nothing to speak of. Only that old fool Dennis has sent for the doctor, and I'm bound to wait up and see him."

"But Anna says your arm is terribly burnt, and you did it all to save those pictures and my writing-table. Oh, John, I can never forgive myself."

"What for?"

Bulteel looked kindly at the girl in the red dressing-gown, who stood before him with swimming eyes, trembling lips, and a white face. He should scarcely have known her for saucy, self-satisfied May Bulteel.

"That you have burnt your right arm; that you might have been killed in that awful room to satisfy a whim of mine."

"It was not so bad as it looked to you when you first opened the door and the draught broke it all into a blaze. Only the window side, where the wood and curtains were, had really caught; the rest was smouldering. I assure you the first step was the worst of it!"

"But you made that first step; and the pictures hung on the wall between the windows, where the blaze was worst. They are all singed and the glasses cracked."

"Not materially injured, I hope!"

"Not the paintings; but think of your arm as you took them down. Ah——"

May shuddered. She had never before come so near physical suffering, and the sight of the bandaged arm, with the house-keeper's descriptive details to back it, had unnerved her. The tears began to run down her cheeks unchecked.

"Don't cry, for goodness' sake! It is not worth that."

John did not know what to say, and turned very red, and fidgeted with the empty tumbler before him.

"But you dragged out my writing-table too, and covered the top of it with your own coat! If you had kept that about you, your arm might have been saved."

"Oh no; for some of the papers were burning, and I clapped the coat down on them to keep them from singeing my face; besides, it was all the work of an instant, and, once I was in there, I saw how much could be done with safety, and I enjoyed fighting the flames for what could reasonably be saved."

"I don't know about 'reasonably,'" May said—then there was a moment's pause—"but I think you went at the risk of your life to fetch me my father's and mother's pictures. Will you forgive me, John, for what I once said about alighting our father's memory? All that has been wiped away to night—and—and—I want to kiss you, John."

May's arms went round her brother's neck for the first time, and her cool fresh cheek was pressed to his rough one, singed and scorched from the recent flames; he stood quite still, but the hot blood mounted quickly to his face, and seemed to sing in his ears, as the girl kissed him on cheek and neck.

"Now kiss me back, or I shall not feel that you have really forgiven me, and let us be friends if we can," she whispered.

John obeyed; he turned his head suddenly towards her, and, bending down, kissed her lips; for an instant as their eyes met, his had a look of piteous entreaty in them which made her start back.

"You are in terrible pain, I am sure; is it your arm? Oh, did I hurt it?"

"No, you did not touch it; it scarcely hurts at all now; we will be friends, if we can."

John was evidently not emotional, May concluded; she felt a little repulsed and disappointed as she went up to her room; the doctor from the village having just rattled up to the door.

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. BEHRENS had come back, and Mr. Behrens now meant business.

The months, which he had seemed to waste in maturing a friendship which apparently could not give him any particular pleasure, were not lost. As a man who had had to do with men, he made them his particular study, and no subtle hint that helped to illustrate character was left undiscerned by him. As knowledge of the world usually argues, by implication, acquaintance with its seamier side, so knowledge of men seems to suggest a quick eye for human weaknesses and frailties. Mr. Behrens's calm, keen vision, at least, occupied itself more with blemishes than virtues, and his habit of conversational reticence helped to sharpen his naturally quick observation.

He was a delightful listener, and thus, oddly enough, came to have the reputation of being a charming converser.

"I had a capital talk with Behrens," some gratified babblers would say, after an hour's monologue, to which Behrens had only lent an attentive ear. He knew how to gratify this desire for talking which is native to a good many people, and his considerate and respectful reception of their superfluities of opinion made him a great favourite. There was no reason at all why he should not be a favourite; there was not so much as a shadow against his fair reputation. He had, on the contrary, many qualities to recommend him. He

and whatever his opinion of human nature, as illustrated by his fellow men, may have been, he kept it in decent privacy.

The scraps of talk concerning his public and private affairs which Major Drew had been able to extract from a mutual acquaintance, were all correct. He had inherited some money, and had made it more by judicious speculation; he lived handsomely, having married a wife above him in station, whose graces and accomplishments gave an air of refinement to his entertainments, and to whom he was a perfectly indulgent husband. He had refrained from introducing her to acquaintances made so irregularly as the Burtons, not because he was ashamed of them—as a student of humanity he held himself above such considerations—but because he felt that they fell short of her standard, and he was too amiably disposed towards pretty Tilly to submit her to his wife's possible coldness.

This, then, was the man whom accident had thrown in the way of the Burtons. He had been living, during the absence of his family abroad, at the hotel to which Fate led them. It was all plain and open to investigation; even Miss Walton could detect nothing to cause alarm in so perfectly respectable a record, and her dislike of him probably arose from that impulsive habit women have of making first impressions into fixed opinions.

Was it, then, all pure benevolence which led him to attach himself to the raw Scotchman and to devote hours and days to his entertainment? Of course it was not; benevolence of this order does not belong to our world, and Behrens laid no claim to angelic qualities.

Bob Burton was hardly even a study

might read the ex-shepherd, and know at once that his simple vanity stood out against a background of dense and solid stupidity; that he was incapable of saying anything clever or even of thinking it; and that other people's clever things were quite thrown away on him. Even his submissiveness to Behrens, and the eagerness with which he hung on him for guidance, must have lost some of their flattery by the form of their expression, for his "barren and untilled" manners lent them no grace.

A man, so limited in ideas that he had to beg or borrow all he owned, could not be very interesting to a gentleman so astute as his friend. He was not interesting, but his money was. Looked at as a capitalist he was bearable, endurable; when you came to view him as a man of practically unlimited credit, he was imposing. To know a man of means so extensive and not to know him better would have been almost criminal. Behrens, it will be seen, held much the same view as the Scotchman of the value of money: on that point they met and were at accord. They also suffered under a mutual anxiety to make Uncle Bob's big pile even bigger, and these two interests were enough to draw them together.

Uncle Bob wanted to make Tilly the biggest heiress in London; to marry her to Fred Temple; and then to stand aside and admire their mode of illustrating his power.

Mr. Behrens was quite willing that this should happen and quite willing to help it to happen, but he did not intend to work for Tilly's aggrandisement without reward. He had his price, though he refrained from stating it; and he had his own scheme, which he modestly kept in the background.

He began as we have seen by giving his friend a glimpse of a broker's office.

"I'm not a professional adviser—I'm a mere amateur myself," he said, when Mr. Burton asked that question about investments.

"You are far better than one," said Uncle Bob with delightful security.

"You are very flattering to say so," Behrens smiled. "I can let you see the way I went about the thing if you like."

Mr. Burton did like, and he went and he saw. If he had known anything about Midas, he would probably have held him to be a stockbroker; but his education having lacked the classical element, he

simply sat and stared. The astonishment of an unstored mind, such as his, does not find very ready expression in words; this way of making money was altogether new to him, and it seemed to him almost uncanny. The immense solitude of the Australian plains, in the days when he reaped wealth from them, had offered no such impetus to a sluggish imagination: in the company of his sheep he had come perhaps to deserve the reproach of the American satirist and to "think mutton"; in that patriarchal life the riches, at least, had grown insensibly, invisibly; here you saw the process before your eyes; you felt it in every heart-throb, in every leap of the pulse.

On the first day he sat and watched and said nothing. When Behrens came back to his side, released from the greetings of many acquaintances, Uncle Bob demanded to be taken somewhere for lunch; the calls upon his powers of wonder having aroused that insatiable tiger within that needed so much cajoling.

When he had eaten and drunk, he asked for an explanation.

"It's simple enough," said Behrens with a smile, and thereupon he discoursed on "bulls" and "bears," of stocks and of cover. When the functions of a bull and a bear had been made clear to a slow apprehension, the questioner wanted to know what "cover" meant.

"Cover," explained Behrens, "is a sum you place in the hands of a broker to secure him from loss. For ten pounds you may become the holder of one thousand stock. If the prices go in your favour, you are the gainer; if, on the other hand, the stock goes down, you only lose the sum you deposited."

"Well!" said Uncle Bob, with a whole volume in the word. His elbows rested on the little table at which they had lunched; he joined and separated the tips of his broad fingers once or twice while he stared over them at his friend.

"You can make a lot and lose next to nothing?"

"That exactly expresses it."

"Have you done much in this line?" he next demanded.

"A little," said Behrens with a modest smile.

"And you've been successful?"

"So people are pleased to say." He kept silence a moment; but the other's questioning eyes seemed to draw a fuller explanation from him. He proceeded to

an illustration; it was a small illustration, for he was not a person to boast, but he came out of it triumphant.

"You made seven hundred pounds on a ten-pound cover?"

"It is done every day."

Uncle Bob brought down his big fist on the table with the accompaniment of a forcible epithet.

"Why shouldn't I do it?" he asked.

"I see no reason in the world why you shouldn't," said Behrens, calmly. "If you like to amuse yourself that way, there is no one who has a better right."

"Do you do it to amuse yourself?"

"That's another affair. My income can never conceivably approach yours, and a loss which would be nothing to you, would be a serious blow to me."

This was a view of the matter which the man of millions rather liked; it showed a proper respect for his wealth; at the same time he was far from wishing merely to amuse himself.

"I want to be richer," he said with a dogged brusqueness. "If we come to figures, I guess there aren't many men I couldn't buy up as easy as look at them; but I mean that there shouldn't be one."

"A very laudable intention," said the listener gravely.

The next day he took his first lesson.

"What am I to buy?" he asked.

His friendly adviser recommended Brighton A's. The monthly traffic statement was excellent, and the stock were sure to advance. Mr. Burton took five thousand at one hundred and twenty-five-and-a-half, and in less than an hour, he had made one-and-a-half profit. The money was as a new-found treasure to him. He prized it as much as if he were not the possessor of sixpence; he who was burdened with a plethora he hardly knew how to rid himself of. It was more to him, seemingly, than it would have been to his nephew, John Temple, who drew the magnificent income of one hundred and fifty pounds a year from the Bank; but then it was not merely so many notes—it was an emblem, a type; it was the first drop of a shower—a shower of gold which was to make him the most envied man in England.

He would not spend the cheque the broker made out for him, not even on Tilly. He took it home and looked at it from time to time with immense respect; but for the mirth so odd a proceeding would have roused in Tilly, he would have had it framed.

Thenceforward his generous adviser became more and more to him, and the City, with the broker's office for its central attraction, was Uncle Bob's true home. With the strange luck that had followed him all his life, his speculations mostly prospered. He leaned on Behrens with a confidence which was a flattery, and he was careful to recommend nothing that entailed a risk. As yet the stakes for which his pupil played were all small. When Burton, used to the sound of large rolling sums, complained of the triviality of his transactions, and wanted to hazard some large amount, his Mentor always counselled prudence, and the wisdom of waiting and looking about. Never was man so careful of a friend's interest; so disinterested, so cautious.

"I'll keep my eyes open and tell you when there's anything going," he said. "You may trust me."

And indeed Uncle Bob might safely trust him, and might have accepted the assurance without expressing himself so grateful for it, seeing that the good thing when it came, would not leave Behrens without reward. That was how the passion for speculation arose, and that was how it grew till it absorbed and swallowed up every other interest.

"Is your business with Mr. Behrens always going on?" Tilly asked one day rather wistfully.

"It's going on till I'm the richest man in England," he answered. "It may stop then if it likes—not before."

"Wouldn't the second richest content you?"

"No," he said, "it would not. I mean you to be the biggest heiress about, and I won't stop short of it."

She sighed, but she said no more. For herself a great deal short of the biggest would have pleased her; but she knew nothing of a speculator's hazardous joys.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PERHAPS if Tilly had not been left very much to her own devices by an uncle who became more and more engrossed in the business of money-making, it would have gone less well with Fred. It was impossible, however, to hold out in cold ingratitude against a young man who used such flattering arts for the consolation of her loneliness.

Fred was very much in love and very much in earnest. When he reviewed his

circumstances, as sometimes, very greatly against his will, he was forced to do, he would anxiously weigh his chances and ponder what he could do to improve them. It was very necessary for him to succeed; it was vital, indeed, to his comfort. If he failed, there would be no more smiles and honeyed phrases from the ridiculous physician at home; the Doctor's ridiculousness would take a much less pleasing form, and his cheques would cease. Creditors would also present themselves in their true light; they would no longer respectfully beg a remittance, they would demand one, and, if they did not get it, they would make things mightily unpleasant for the debtor.

It seems melancholy that a young man's love should be soiled by considerations such as these. In his better moments, Fred felt the position to be rather damaging to his good opinion of himself; but he found consolation in the excellent use he meant to make of Tilly's money, and in the liberality with which he meant to contribute to her happiness.

Doubtless most of us would find it easier to be amiable on unlimited means, and the privilege of bad temper ought to be left to the people whose ends will scarce meet, much less "tie in a handsome bow." If Fred were transplanted into plenty, the chances were he would make a perfectly irreproachable husband, and his own inner consciousness of this helped him to sustain his siege.

"I've squared it with the old boy," he would reflect, "and I think Tilly is yielding;" so his hopes whispered to him, and, on the whole, they were stronger than his fears.

Tilly was indeed yielding, perhaps in part because she did not know what else to do. Everybody expected her to decide in Fred's favour, and the expectations of other people have a larger influence on our decisions than most of us would like to own. Fred had walked, and ridden, and danced with her, and had seriously compromised her in the eyes of the Moxon school, who entirely ignore the brotherly or cousinly element in a friendship between two young people of the opposite sex. More than that, all those walks and talks, and innocent pleasantries had awakened hopes in Uncle Bob's heart which it was infinitely harder for her to disappoint. It might have given her a certain gratification to shock Mrs. Moxon, but it gave her none to wound her best friend.

Thus, when she came to ask herself seriously why she should not gratify her uncle and her lover, and win the approval of Mrs. Grundy as well, she found no satisfactory ground of objection. She did not care for anyone else. On that point she was emphatic with herself, and, though there might very likely be other Fred Temples wandering about the world who would want to marry her, there was no counting on the certainty that she should like them better.

Fred was likeable enough, if it came to that. He was a very sympathetic young fellow; almost as obliging in his changes of hue as a chameleon, taking his colour from the atmosphere in which he happened to find himself. It is a little hard on sympathetic people that they should be taxed with insincerity when they are doing their best to reflect their friends, and to share their tastes and opinions. Fred was not of set purpose insincere when he was with Tilly, and yet it was in her company that he reached his highest level.

If, when he left her, he fell in with some companion of an easier morality and went off with him to earn a morning's headache over billiards and the wine cup, what are we to think of him?

With Tilly, Fred was gentle—almost serious; her truthfulness, her innocent gaiety, her simple confidences, touched and moved him and made him wish to be better than he was. He swore that, if she yielded him her love, he would begin the new life for which even the worst prodigal is always longing, though he may seem to choose the husks and the swine. He breathed a purer air with her than he had known before, and he began to think himself in love with goodness. This softer, humbler mood made him very winning, and as he came and went, and did little things to please her, and was thoughtful of her and amiable towards her uncle, Tilly found that softening process beginning in her heart which ended in her surrender.

It was a very gradual process, however; and Fred showed the wisdom of the serpent in not pressing her too soon again for that answer he still held to be due to him.

But one afternoon when Spring was putting on those crude and cold airs she wears in her unripe youth, when Tilly was feeling rather dull and in sad companionship with the weather, it all came about.

"You are going to Mrs. Popham's to-night?" he asked. "It is to be something quite special and splendid, I believe. It is

to be an author's evening; the latest fad is the worship of literary genius. I only hope the lions will consent to divide the adulation without quarrelling over it."

"People who write books?" she asked. "What kind of books?"

"Anything you like; essays, historical fictions, and novels that tell nothing but the truth."

"What do they talk about?" she asked, growing more interested, and turning a pair of beautiful questioning eyes on him.

"I believe they talk about their own immortal works," said Fred with frivolity, "unless when they are throwing stones at their reviewers or cheapening one another."

"You make them out to be the meanest of people, and yet we find our best and most sustaining thoughts in their books," she said, with an edge of reproach in her voice.

"Perhaps they exhaust all their good things in print. I am speaking only of small authorship; our Madame Récamier isn't likely to attract famous writers to her salon. The smaller fry have hard enough work, I believe, to hold their heads above water, and it's a struggle for any of us to keep clear of envy, hatred, and malice, when another fellow gets anything we have set our hearts on."

"A good review—or a second edition?"

"Yes, or something much more worth coveting."

"The secret of 'Perpetual Motion,' perhaps?" There was a glimmer of fun in her eyes.

"Much more precious than that."

"That would make your fortune," she said; "that patent would make you rich for ever."

"But my heart's desire would make me happy for ever."

She had known it was coming, though no one would have said so impersonal a question as the idiosyncrasies of authors—about which neither of them knew anything—would have led straight to a love declaration. Women, however, have quick instincts, and she had divined his intention far off.

She met it as only one girl in a thousand would have done—quite simply and without any affectation of mystery.

"Is it that you want me, Fred?" she asked.

"Yes," he said, reduced to simplicity too by a certain gravity in her tones; "it is on I want Tillv."

"Are you sure—quite sure," she questioned. "Am I really and truly your heart's desire?"

"You are really and truly my heart's one craving; of that there can be no question. But there is a question—I never knew before how great—of my worthiness."

"Ah," she said with a little catch in her breath, "we must help each other."

Perhaps she already divined that she might need one day to be strong for him as well as for herself; but if so, she would not think of it now. It was a very quiet surrender, too calm and quiet perhaps, to match the whirl of emotions which made tumult in Fred and hardly allowed him to realise his triumph; and yet when he rose to go, after many words and vows, she suffered his kisses and she let her hands lie warm and soft in his.

"You will tell my uncle?" she said, and she blushed as her eyes met his. "It will make him glad."

When he left her with the promise of seeing her again that evening, she sank down again on the low seat she had occupied by the fire. "It will make him glad," she repeated, as if that made her chief gladness too. Then she fell to thinking of her lover, and wondering how life would unroll itself at his side. She was a little grave, perhaps; but she was not visited by any regrets, and she remembered Fred's whispered phrases with a smile of pleasure. And, if all this did not mean love, it at least was an excellent imitation of it, so good that it deceived both her lover and herself.

Uncle Bob took the news heartily, and celebrated it with much eating and drinking, and showers of presents which fell on all the household.

As for the ladies of the establishment, who had taken so deep an interest in the solution of Tilly's problem, they all basely professed themselves disappointed. Mrs. Moxon had so entirely disapproved of the manner and method of the courtship, that she could not consistently rejoice over its conclusion.

"It may be the mode in the middle ranks of life," she said; "I am without experience to guide me, but——"

"How odd!" interposed Honoria, with that awful simplicity she could assume; "were you married right off, without any of the preliminaries?"

Mrs. Moxon's dignity allowed of no reply to this challenge, and thus her objec-

tions were adroitly quenched. Mrs. Drew suffered a divided allegiance, and was one moment happy with the rejoicing lover, and the next sorrowful with the rejected one. As for Honoria, she cared neither for Fred's happiness nor John's misery, but she said it was a shame and a disgrace, that Tilly had been made to choose so soon, instead of waiting to honour a Marquis or a Duke, and she announced that she meant to give Uncle Bob "a piece of her mind."

She ended, however, by thanking him for a bracelet his bounty had bestowed on her; and, when she would have transferred her remonstrances to Tilly, she was wise enough to perceive that they came too late.

"Well," she said, "you've been in a hurry, Tilly."

"Do you think so?" said Tilly, opening her eyes; "it seems to me I've been taking a lifetime to make up my mind; but then it is a decision for a lifetime, and you must ponder a while before you can give any young gentleman so large a license."

"You should have waited," said Honoria, decidedly. "There are young men in every street who are quite as good as Mr. Fred Temple."

"You can't expect me to believe that," said Tilly with a laugh. "You will be convinced of his superior virtues before we are married, Honoria."

"Then," said Honoria, as if her conversion were likely to be a matter of time, "you don't mean to get married in a hurry?"

"I mean to get the full good out of being engaged, first. One shouldn't use up one's pleasures too fast, and when you are married you *are* married."

"That's why I'm not married," said Honoria, so gravely that they both laughed; and then they rushed at each other as girls will and embraced for no perceptible reason.

Honoria was in good spirits. It pleased her to consider herself very penetrating, and she foresaw, or fancied she foresaw, certain complications which might arise with hazardous consequences to the engagement and promise of piquancy and excitement to all beholders; but these forebodings did not hinder her from immediately launching into a discussion which has a perennial interest for the feminine mind.

Almost any kind of lover—even the least satisfactory—will do as a peg on

which to hang a wedding trousseau—an excuse to spread a wedding feast; and since every woman hopes to be married some day and has already rehearsed the ceremony a thousand times in her own private audience chamber, this kind of talk has a personal and vital interest which sustains it from generation to generation.

Man, being of a more sluggish habit of imagination, does not take such panoramic views of life and sees mostly the yard or two of road ahead of him. Uncle Bob had not yet heard the sound of the marriage bells that had made merry music in Honoria's ears; he had had his vision, too, but it was of gold; gathering, accumulating, heaped up till the glittering pile made every man in England wonder and envy; and when the last coin crowned it there should be a wedding and a spending such as never was seen or known before.

"You are pleased?" Tilly asked, more moved than she had yet been when he gave her his blessing.

"Just by ordinar' pleased," the lapse into his native speech proved it.

"Is he good to you?" she asked wistfully. "Will he be a companion to you?"

"Good to me—a companion?" he echoed with a puzzled laugh. "He's a young lad and I'm an auld kark—he's got all the road to travel that I've done wi' and left behind; you can't expect us to keep step together. As to good—he's got no call to be good to me that I know of—" his tones took a faint tinge of complacency. "Come to that, it's you and me that the goodness comes from."

"Ah!" she urged; "but will you give him the place I hold? Shall we be son and daughter to you? If he isn't going to be a son to you—I—"

"You'll be no wife of his!" he laughed, as if at an intended jest; but she was serious.

"I'll be no wife of his. I'll do nothing that will take me away from you."

"Look here, my lass"—he tried to speak easily, but his voice had a rough tenderness in it—"you and me—we've never cast out, and we never will. But on the day you wed wi' your sweetheart, it's his life you've got to choose. Mind, I don't say it's his blame. He's a gleg and a blithe young callant, and I like him well; but his ways are not my ways. It's all I can do to make sense of his clippet English tongue, let alone his notions; and, maybe—maybe he might come to think me a fash—"

"I see he isn't to your mind," she said quickly. Then she drew closer to him. "You can't part with me?"

"Ay, I can part with you," he said gently. "I can part with you to give you to the lad of your choice and mine."

"But why need there be any parting?" she persisted. "If I must take a husband, why must I lose an uncle? We'll make him one of us, if you like; but you are my first love," she said, with a laugh which was half a sob. "I am not going to desert you."

"You'll not go counter to his wishes?" he asked.

"Not if they are reasonable wishes. I've never obeyed you when you were unreasonable"—she tried to give a lighter turn to the talk—"and do you think I'm going to reverence every whim of a young fellow who might be your grandson?"

She broke away from him and would hear no more. She would not even listen to the fears that knocked at her heart for admission. Did he mean to hand her over to her husband and leave her, without taking part or lot in the splendours for which he had toiled? And Fred, would he be willing to acquiesce in this scheme? About her love for this old man there was no shadow of a question; but there might well have been a question of her love for Fred, since she found it so difficult to imagine a life unshared by other company than his.

She had decided—a little to Fred's surprise—to be present at that glorification of authorship, which was Mrs. Popham's latest whim. Fred would have liked to spend the evening with her at home, and to have had from her more of those assurances of which lovers never seem to have enough; but he was not even allowed to call for her and be her escort, since she had arranged to go with the Sherringtons and Miss Dicey, who, in virtue of their modest celebrity, were also bidden. Fred, therefore, did not see her till she was announced with her fellow guests. He had taken up his post near the door to watch for her approach, and, as he saw her, so radiant and beautiful, he felt a great rush of tenderness, and courage, and wonder at his own fortune, too soon to be displaced by envy and jealous doubts.

Why had she nothing but a smile for him, she who belonged to him? He would have liked to claim her before all the world; he coveted the words she gave to others; the grave interest with which

she listened to the drivelling idiotcies of those writing people. Jealousy is an ugly passion, and it did not look any handsomer because it was displayed on Fred's comely young face. It was quite visible to everybody, though possibly the company may have mistaken the origin of the malady, and put it down to the chronic sore of unrequited merit.

Fred refused to be amused by a scene which at another time would have fed his comic vein, and been rich in pleasantry for him.

Mrs. Popham's drawing-room was a little miniature world that evening, where many different humours had play; here were the modest, shrinking from notice and hiding their merit in corners; here were the bold, who love to make a bustle, fondly believing all the world to be as keenly conscious of their writings as themselves, and vainly hanging their hopes on a literary eternity. Perhaps, as Fred had said, there was no real genius present, no one with a soul large and simple enough to disentangle himself from the claims of an imperious self, and so free to give as well as to receive; a world in miniature where there were heart-burnings, and stirrings, and faintings by the way, yet not without its own poor moral ideal, the highest it could define for itself in a life where good intentions are so apt to be "dispersed among hindrances."

To Fred, in the anger of his disappointed hopes, it was all an impertinent mockery; there was affectation in the sad, gazelle-eyed gaze with which Mr. Sherrington viewed his fellow immortals; there was servility in the alacrity with which Miss Dicey caught at an introduction to a scribbler of more distinguished claims. It was all a vain show; a poor, empty, ridiculous delusion.

Mrs. Popham was too busy flitting about—a meagre figure against the background of talent—distributing her olive crowns of praise, to have a spare glance for this gloomy youth, and, when at last he found himself by Tilly's side, she met him with nothing but regrets for her uncle's absence.

Her heart was very tender towards the old man that night.

"I wish I could have persuaded him to come," she said, "it would have been a new scene for him."

"I don't think it's much in his line," said Fred coldly; "I should have imagined he'd have enough of this sort of thing at Yarrow House."

"Then you don't miss him?"

She asked the question, hardly knowing how it occurred to her; perhaps it arose from that unformulated dread in her heart which she refused to entertain.

"No," he answered, with pardonable candour. "I missed nobody but you."

"Don't you find it amusing?"

"No," he said with reproach, "I don't find it at all amusing. I find it vulgar and pretentious, and abominably slow."

"Oh, how severe!" she said lightly.

"Perhaps you haven't been introduced to the nicest people. I have been talking to a young man who is a poet. He has been telling me the secret of making verse; it is almost as difficult as Perpetual Motion, but much more interesting."

Fred looked as if he would have annihilated the poet on the spot; but Tilly, perhaps guessing his design, put an arm in his and led him away. She was kinder to him after that, neglecting literature that she might smile on him; and the evening ended more hopefully than its outset had promised.

On the whole, Fred compared very favourably in looks with the rest of the company; but, then, nobody expects genius to be handsomely housed.

"Genius!" shouted Fred derisively; but Tilly persisted in the phrase. If Fred was better-looking than others, there was no reason why he should be so vain as to imagine himself cleverer also.

Tilly, it will be perceived, meant to practise a wholesome severity towards him now that he was her accepted lover; he was to be kept afar off, and only allowed to come near when he was on his very best behaviour.

THE MIRACULOUS STATUE AT SAINT LO.

LAST summer, whilst passing a few days at Saint Lo, a picturesque little Norman town, I took up an old French guide-book, and was amused to find that the first place in the list of objects of interest in the neighbourhood was occupied by "*une Image Miraculeuse*." The description was so delightfully vague that my curiosity was at once excited. Did the miraculous refer to the origin of the statue; or were we to assume that the power of working miracles was claimed for a block of marble? In either case it was certainly

an object of interest, and I set off at once in search of it. My task was not difficult; no sooner did I pronounce the words "*L'Image Miraculeuse*" to the first person I encountered, than I was overwhelmed with offers of guides. These, however, I declined when I discovered that the statue was in the church close at hand.

Now the Church of Notre Dame is of a size and magnificence which one would scarcely expect to find in so small and unimportant a town as Saint Lo. It was begun in the thirteenth century, but not completed until the middle of the fifteenth. Like most of the churches built at that time, it is a huge pile with massive pillars, dark and gloomy excepting where the sun, shining through the old stained-glass windows, lights it up with weird splendour.

Just inside the great western entrance I found the object of my search, a statue of the Virgin, placed close to one of the great pillars—from which position she derives her name, "*Notre Dame du Pilier*." The pillar, as well as the wall behind it, is covered with votive offerings of every shape, size, and device. Of these, one sets forth how a mother in despair implored the Virgin to save her child, and her prayer was granted. On a second, it is the mother who, by the help of the Virgin, has been restored to her family. Others, more vague, speak of special blessings received; deliverance from some danger; a misfortune averted, or desire granted; these and a hundred others, varying from the clearest statement of a fact, to a fanciful description of a sentiment, each with a date and generally a name or initial attached, form a fitting background for "*L'Image Miraculeuse*."

The statue itself, rather under life-size, represents a simple, gentle-looking girl, holding in her arms an infant. Though evidently of modern date and of mediocre workmanship and design, it is free from all traces of the absurdity and vulgarity which characterise so many of the statues in country churches: nay more, "*Notre Dame du Pilier*" is not without a certain naïve grace of its own, as if faith and earnest feeling in the sculptor had striven hard to atone for his lack of genius and skill. In the child, too, there is a touch more of Nature than one generally finds in such productions. But unfortunately, some Curé, bent upon demonstrating his piety and taste, has effectually destroyed any charm the statue might possess by placing

on the heads both of the mother and the child golden crowns thickly set with mock stones. The effect is ghastly.

I could examine the statue at my leisure, for, as it was early in the day, I had the church to myself. I looked at it from every point and angle; from a distance and close at hand; but, at the end, I was more than ever at a loss to discover in what the miraculous charm of this piece of spurious art could consist. At length, wearied of trying to arrive at a conclusion, I sat down at a little distance from the statue, resolved to wait and see what elucidation Fate would send in my way. I had not been sitting more than a few minutes when the church door opened and a peasant woman entered, on her way to the market, to judge by her basket of butter and eggs. She had a bustling, business-like air, as if calculating the value of her goods, as she placed them on the ground. This done, she drew a prie-dieu close in front of the Virgin; smiled up at her as if at an old acquaintance, and in a second every care and trouble seemed to fall away from her. I gazed at the woman in amazement: her whole aspect was changed: she sat there, her eyes fixed with a real honest affection upon the face of the statue; there was no assumption of reverence, or awe; she looked at it as she might have looked at her own peasant mother, and her lips moved rapidly as if addressing one whom she knew would understand and sympathise with her haste. It was soon all over; in less time than it takes me to relate it, the woman was on her feet again, cheered and soothed, had seized her basket, and was out of the church.

For the next hour a regular stream of people entered; most of those who came were women—the men, I noticed, always wore a hesitating air as if afraid they were doing something not quite compatible with their dignity; but the women had no such scruple. The generality were of the poorer class—laundresses, market-women, small shop-keepers, who, in the midst of their work, yet found time to pay their devotions to the Virgin. It was always the same thing—a rush, as it were, from the busy world outside; a moment's prayer and then back to their work again; no washing of faces or putting on of bonnets: they came just as they were, in dirt and in rags: but they came.

Of course, amongst so many, some were careless or indifferent—there as a form, or

through custom; but these were few, the majority evidently came because they derived real comfort from their visit. One woman interested me especially. Though she was poorly clad, there was an air of faded respectability in her thin shabby shawl and neatly tied bonnet, and some attempt at tidiness in the dress of the little child she carried in her arms. But she looked pale and haggard; her eyes were sunken and red, as if with much weeping. There was something inexpressibly touching in her appearance, it bore such unmistakable signs of the struggle of life. The baby, too, had that aged, worn look, which comes so early to the children of the poor; it gazed around with odd bright eyes as if it knew so much already.

As the woman passed by my side, I noticed that she was weeping bitterly; not with the loud hysterical weeping which comes from angry feeling, but with the dull noiseless sobs which speak so plainly of despair. She put the child on the ground, and the little thing wandered up and down the long aisles, as if it were at home; it could not be more than two years old, yet it made its way composedly into the different chapels; examined in turn each of the Apostles; and looked up with keen enquiring glances at the old fresco of the murder of Becket, who seems to have passed some years at Saint Lo during his exile. There was no superfluous reverence in its tiny nature; for without a thought, it entered the most sacred precincts; ran its hand over awe-inspiring relics; peered down into the crypt; toddled over the graves of the old Abbots, all with that quaint old-fashioned air which sat so strangely on so small a frame. Clearly it was not the first visit it had paid to Nôtre Dame; clearly, too, the mother felt that there it was free from danger; for, from the moment she had set it down, she gave not a glance in its direction. She just sank down before the statue as if prostrate, and buried her face in her hands; from time to time, her frame shook with sobs; but she made no noise, and never raised her head. After a time, her sobs became more rare, and she glanced timidly at the statue; but only for a second, and then again she buried her face. At length, raising her head, she fixed her eyes with a strange expression of mingled peace and fear upon the Virgin. whilst tears coursed down her

cheeks, and her lips moved busily, as if in supplication. Gradually the tears were dried; fear was banished; and happiness—no, I cannot say that any touch of happiness came. Did she know the meaning of the word?—but peace and something near akin to hope, shone upon her face. Then, having kissed the hem of the Virgin's robe, and casting at her one look of heartfelt love and gratitude, she picked up her child and left the church. As she passed through the door, she gently kissed her baby; when she had entered, she had seemed scarcely conscious of its existence!

As the day wore on (for I still kept my post), visitors of a higher class were not lacking; the richer bourgeois; the owners of the little châteaux so plentiful in that neighbourhood; the officers' wives; Sisters of Mercy; all made their way to this corner and sat there, side by side; and with very few exceptions they seemed to go away calmer and happier than they came. I lingered hour after hour in shade of the pillar, but came no nearer to the solution of the mystery with regard to the miracles. At length, resolved not to be baffled, I followed out of the church a Sister of Charity, whom I had observed as being most devout in her worship. She was an elderly woman, with a gentle, peaceful face. I asked her humbly enough (for I felt as if I ought to know) why the statue was called "miraculous." For a moment, she looked aghast; such ignorance was to her incomprehensible; but when I told her I came from England, her astonishment vanished, and she muttered with a kind of pity in her tone: "Oui, oui, je le sais. On ne connaît pas la Sainte Vierge là-bas." Then, in her quaint Norman dialect, she poured into my ear a string of confused stories, concerning the various miracles which Our Lady of the Pillar had wrought in the neighbourhood. Unfortunately, as I soon discovered, most of these were related upon mere hearsay; in fact, when I pressed the point, the good lady confessed that she had not seen one of them herself; but, with her evidently, seeing was not necessary for believing, as her faith in the miracles as such was profound and unshakable. She knew nothing about the statue, neither whence it came, nor by whom it was made. But the convent bell rang, and she hastened away.

So far, I had not made much progress; and, whilst hesitating as to what I should

do, I observed a handsome, intelligent-looking girl leaving the church. Summoning all my courage, I addressed her, and, explaining that I was a stranger, begged her to tell me why the statue was called "miraculous."

At first she appeared both puzzled and amused, and recommended me to apply to the Curé.

As I particularly wished to avoid having anything to do with the priests, I asked her just to tell me whether she herself had ever seen anyone cured of their infirmities in direct answer to prayer to the Virgin.

She looked at me for a moment earnestly, and then, without a trace of doubt, or of fear of ridicule, she told me that, one morning, the spring before, she had gone to church as usual, and whilst there a thin, emaciated woman had hobbled in on crutches. She seemed almost paralysed, and had had the greatest difficulty in reaching the statue. Once there, she had sunk down helpless. The priest, and the friends who had accompanied the woman, joined with her in prayer to the Virgin; and a few minutes later the woman arose, and, without the aid of crutch or stick, walked across the church to the high altar.

"Yes," said the girl calmly, as if she were relating the most natural thing in the world, "from that day she has walked as well as you or I. The crutches you may have seen by the side of the statue were hers. She left them there that day. She told me only the other day that, just as M. le Curé ended his prayer, she felt a strange sensation rush through all her limbs, and at that moment her strength returned."

I watched the girl keenly whilst she was speaking, and it was impossible to look at her and doubt her veracity. She was evidently telling me what she herself believed to be true; and, by further questioning, I discovered this belief in the Miraculous Statue to be shared by the greater part of the inhabitants of Saint Lo.

I left Saint Lo, and, as I wandered through Normandy, on every side I heard of preparations for a grand pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Lourdes. Hundreds of poor women were pinching and saving to scrape together the miserable pittance necessary for the journey. The lame, the halt, the blind, were all going; going, too, in the firm faith that the end of their troubles was at hand.

I came back to England to find that "Faith Healing"—the name our "Image

"Miraculouse" assumes—in spite of the ridicule showered down upon it, counts its disciples by the hundred.

What does it mean? How is it possible for people in this practical, sceptical nineteenth century of ours to have this blind, irrational faith in the miraculous, which would have brought joy to the heart of a mediæval Bishop? And yet they have it. It is impossible to live amongst the Norman peasants—and in Normandy, perhaps, more than anywhere this blind faith is found—with their simple truthful natures, and believe them capable of deliberate life-long deception. And even if they were, what end would they gain by so doing?

It comes to this: a number of people believe that by kneeling before certain statues, or miraculous cures may be obtained. In other words, that there are localities from which prayer ascends to Heaven with a peculiar and all-powerful force.

Common sense and reason alike declare this to be impossible; and yet we cannot doubt the sincerity of the believers in these miracles. For this, surely, there can be only one solution. These miraculous cures are obtained—not by any means all of those reported, but enough to cast a halo of probability over the more doubtful—not by the help of any place or statue, but by the force of an overwhelming emotion.

After all, are not nineteen-twentieths of the ills to which humanity is heir, directly or indirectly connected with loss of nerve power? Is it not then possible that, under the influence of a strong emotion, the patient's whole nature may be so thrilled that an impetus may be given to the nervous system sufficiently strong to inspire it with new life?

As those women whom I watched felt their cares and troubles vanish by the force of the sympathy they fancied they were receiving from Notre Dame du Pilier, surely, under the same influence, the more imaginative might be so excited at the idea of casting off bodily ills by the help of the Virgin, that their bodies, strengthened by their faith and will, might really be freed from the evil under which they were suffering.

MIZPAH.

WE never used the word while thou and I
Walked close together in life's working way;
There was no need for it, when hand and eye
Might meet content and faithful every day

But now, with anguish from a stricken heart,
Mizpah! I cry; the Lord keep watch between
Thy life and mine, that death hath riven apart;
Thy life beyond the awful veil, unseen,
And my poor broken being, which must glide
Through ways familiar to us both, till death
Shall, of a surety, lead me to thy side,
Beyond the chance and change of mortal breath.
Mizpah! yea, love, in all my bitter pain,
I trust God keepeth watch betwixt us twain.

The lips are dumb from which I used to hear
Strong words of counsel, tender words of praise;
Poor I must go my way without the cheer
And sunshine of thy presence all my days.
But God keeps watch my ways and days upon,
On all I do, on all I bear for thee.
My work is left me, though my mate is gone;
A solemn trust hath love bequeathed to me.
I take the task thy languid hand laid down
That summer evening, for mine own away,
And may the Giver of both cross and crown
Pronounce me faithful at our meeting-day!
Mizpah! the word gives comfort to my pain:
I know God keepeth watch betwixt us twain!

ALL HALLOW E'EN.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

A YEAR passed; a year spent pleasantly enough by Jack, partly at the Hall, partly on the Continent. He was very popular in his county; a keen sportsman, a good shot, and a hard rider, he was sure to find favour in the eyes of the country Squires; and equally sure, as the owner of Melville Hall, to find favour in the eyes of their wives and daughters. Handsome Jack Melville, with his brown face and bright eyes, and his never-failing good humour, was always a welcome visitor, no matter where he went. Everyone, high and low, rich and poor, liked him, and had a good word to say for him; but, although his name had been coupled with that of more than one fair damsel, he was still a bachelor, and seemed likely to remain so.

"The girls are all so charming that it is quite impossible to have a choice," he used to say in his half-laughing, half-serious voice, when Mrs. Wood, who had not yet abandoned all hope of seeing her Emily at the Hall, pointed out to him, in her most maternal manner, the advantages of the conjugal state, and hinted that the Hall required a mistress. "If it were only legal to have three or four wives, now—and, really, considering the alarming predominance of the female over the male sex, I am inclined to think it would be advisable—I should have no difficulty at all; but, in the present unsatisfactory state of the law, I am not inclined to run the risk of a gigantic failure."

But, although Jack laughed and jested, he felt the loneliness of his great house very on-

pressive sometimes, and often longed for some more congenial society than that of the country Squires, who were always ready to dine with him, and drink his wine, and vote him the best fellow going. Their long stories and endless political discussions used to bore Jack unutterably sometimes. Should he ever sink to their level, he wondered; be content with the narrow round of pleasures and duties which made up their lives; marry and bring up children, and grow red-faced, and fat, and narrow-minded?

But still, in spite of his occasional fits of boredom, the country life was pleasant, and suited him well enough; and he was inclined to grumble when some important business, connected with his estate, called him to town and detained him there during those months of September and October, which are so pleasant in the country and so insufferably dull in London. Jack, who knew scarcely anyone but his lawyer, felt the time hang somewhat heavily on his hands, and was unfeignedly glad, when, one morning, while strolling down Oxford Street, he met a friend—a Dr. Maxwell—whom he had not seen for more than four years.

The two friends were mutually pleased to meet again, and Jack, without much difficulty, was induced to accompany Dr. Maxwell home, and was introduced to his wife, a pretty, merry-eyed little woman, who welcomed him very cordially, and invited him to dinner on the following day. The party consisted of Jack, his host and hostess, and a young barrister, an Irishman with an inexhaustible supply of jokes and comical stories; and, as the dinner was good, the wine excellent, and the talk amusing, Jack thoroughly enjoyed himself. The young Irishman had another engagement later on in the evening, and left early. Soon after his departure the Doctor was summoned to a patient; and Jack went upstairs to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Maxwell was sitting alone.

She insisted that he should remain until her husband returned, and was so pleasant and amusing that Jack was quite surprised, when the little French clock struck twelve, to find how late it was. He rose with a gay apology.

"How quickly the evening has passed! I had no idea it was so late," he said. "I must go; say 'good-night' for me to your husband, please, Mrs. Maxwell."

"Don't go yet," and Mrs. Maxwell

declined to take any notice of the offered hand. "Arthur cannot be long now, and he will be disappointed if he returns and finds that you have left so early."

Jack glanced at the clock and smiled. "We quiet country people consider twelve o'clock late, Mrs. Maxwell. But I am in no hurry, and will wait, if you are sure that I am not wearying you."

"Indeed, no. Wait till Arthur returns, and then the carriage can take you to your hotel. It is a wild wet night. Listen," as a gust of wind swept down the street and rattled the windows loudly, "how the wind is rising. I suppose we must expect stormy weather now. This is the last day of October."

"Is it?"

Jack started and smiled thoughtfully. He had risen from his chair, and was now standing with one arm resting on the mantelpiece, and was looking down at the bright fire. His thoughts had gone back to that October night just a year ago now, when he had kept vigil in the old house, and to the mysterious visitor who had come and gone and left no trace behind to say who or what she was, or why she came! The mystery which surrounded her seemed as deep and as far from being solved as ever, he thought. He was so silent and his face had grown so strangely thoughtful all at once, that Mrs. Maxwell glanced at him curiously.

"What are you thinking about, Mr. Melville?" she asked.

Jack started at the words as if out of a dream. He looked down at her with a grave smile.

"I was thinking of a very strange experience which happened to me just a year ago to-night," he said, "and just at this hour! Do you believe in ghosts, Mrs. Maxwell?"

"To a certain extent. I am a Scotch-woman, you know, and all Scotch people are superstitious! I remember when I was a girl at home, we used to practise all kinds of small charms and incantations on All Hallow E'en," Mrs. Maxwell laughed. "What was the strange experience of which you speak so gravely, Mr. Melville, and which happened just a year ago to-night? Did you," she laughed again softly, "see a ghost?"

Jack looked at her eagerly.

"I don't know! I saw a mysterious figure, but whether it was flesh or spirit, I have never been able to ascertain."

"Tell me about it. I love ghost stories above all things," Mrs. Maxwell cried.

So Jack, encouraged and made eloquent by her interested face, told his story. He told her of his conversation with old Angélique; of the horror which his scepticism had awakened in the old woman's mind; how she had left the cloth, and food, and wine behind her, in the hope that he might repent of his refusal. He described the room where he sat; the stormy night; the wind which whistled round the house, and shrieked down the chimney, and crashed against the branches of the trees outside the house. He told her of his vigil; of the strange thoughts, and the weird fancies that had come to him as he sat alone in the silent night by the dying fire; of the superstitious awe which gradually had crept over his mind as he thought of his dear dead friend and sister, both of whom seemed so near to him, so present with him that night!

"I can't imagine why I did it. I suppose it must have been the influence of the hour, and of old Angélique's nonsense," he said, with a half apologetic, half agitated laugh. "I am not generally a superstitious man, nor given to indulge in idle fancies; but all at once, as I sat there, there came over me the most curious feeling—a feeling I cannot describe, but which was quite irresistible—that I must do as Angélique wished. I rose from my chair; I spread the cloth upon the table; I placed upon it the bread and wine; and then I flung the hall-door widely open, so that the spirits—if any there were about—might enter in, and eat and drink. Then I went back to my chair, feeling half amused and half angry at my own folly, and waited."

"And some one came?"

Little Mrs. Maxwell bent forward in her chair and looked at him with eager interest in her dark eyes. "Oh, do go on, Mr. Melville!"

"Yes, some one came," Jack replied slowly. "I was sitting almost opposite the door; it was partly open, and before it hung a velvet curtain just"—and he glanced at the drawing-room door—"like that one. The curtain was swaying to and fro in the wind, and as I watched it lazily I saw a shadowy white figure cross the hall with gliding, noiseless step, then a white hand was laid upon the curtain, and—Good Heavens!"

Jack started; he drew himself up to his full height and looked with eager, half-frightened eyes at the door. "See—there it is again!" he cried.

"What? what?" Mrs. Maxwell cried in a

voice almost as excited as his own, and she looked eagerly in the direction which his pointing hand indicated. As she looked, a slim white hand pushed the curtain aside, and a tall figure in a flowing white robe, with long yellow hair hanging over her shoulders, entered. The room was but dimly lighted—Mrs. Maxwell hated a glaring light, and would have nothing but wax candles in her drawing-room. There was plenty of light round the piano and mantelpiece; but the lower end of the room was all in deep shadow, and in the dimness the white figure which entered looked so ghostly and shadowy that Jack might easily be pardoned if, in the surprise and excitement of the moment, he fancied that his mysterious experience of a year ago was about to be repeated! Mrs. Maxwell looked and laughed softly.

"How you startled me! It is no ghost; it is only my Cousin Winnie," she said in a half-amused, half-disappointed voice. "She had a bad headache and would not appear at dinner. Come in, child. What do you mean by roaming about the house in that ghostly fashion?"

Winnie hesitated, advanced a little further across the room, and then paused and coloured vividly as she looked at Jack. "I thought you were alone, Annie. I would not have come in if I had known anyone was here," she said confusedly.

"It is only Mr. Melville. You have interrupted a most thrilling ghost story, Winnie. Please go on, Mr. Melville, I will introduce you properly to my cousin by-and-by. I really cannot afford to spoil the delightfully creepy sensation, which your thrilling ghost story has produced, by base conventionalities," Mrs. Maxwell laughed. "Please go on."

"Yes, please go on."

Winnie sank down in a graceful heap on the hearth-rug at her cousin's feet, and, resting her clasped hands on her knee, looked up demurely at Jack. "I do love a good ghost story."

Jack hesitated and coloured; Winnie's entrance had disturbed the flow of his eloquence. He looked down admiringly at her pretty pale face; at the flowing golden hair, on which the firelight was flinging all manner of warm reflections; at the clasped white hands; the loose, flowing dress she wore, which seemed to Jack's ignorant masculine eyes infinitely more graceful and becoming than Mrs. Maxwell's costly evening dress. Mrs. Maxwell looked up at him impatiently.

"Oh, do go on," she said. "Winnie, he was sitting alone just a year ago to-night in his ancestral halls, keeping the vigil of All Hallow'E'en. He had observed all the sacred rites; had spread the cloth and placed food and wine upon it, and set the doors wide open; and just as he was relating that while he waited he saw a white figure cross the hall, a white hand drew the curtains back, and—just at this thrilling point you entered and interrupted him. Go on, Mr. Melville."

"There is not much more to tell."

Jack gave a little awkward laugh, for at her cousin's words Winnie had started violently. A vivid flush crossed her face, and she looked up at Jack with a strange expression in her dark eyes which startled and puzzled him.

"The figure—whether ghost or human I do not profess to say—entered. She took no notice of me, she did not even glance at me; but she crossed the long room with a slow, noiseless step till she stood by the table. She poured the wine into the glass and drank; she broke the bread and ate, all in silence, and, in a strange, ghostly fashion, then departed as noiselessly as she had entered."

"And you did not follow her?"

"After a moment or two I did; but, just at first, I was so startled and confused at the strange occurrence that I could only sit in my chair and gape at her, like the idiot I was," Jack answered frankly; "and when at last I rushed after her, I found the hall empty, the door wide open, but no trace of my visitor. Like a shadow she came, like a shadow she went! I should have thought that all that had passed had been a dream, had it not been that the half-emptied glass, and the broken bread upon the table, assured me that it was no dream, but a puzzling reality. Angélique, my old housekeeper, was, of course, firmly convinced that I had seen a ghost, and is more deeply rooted in her superstitious folly than ever."

"And you never heard anything more?"

Winnie asked the question in a queer, excited voice.

"No; I did all I could to solve the mystery; but a mystery it remains, and to all appearance will remain," Jack answered.

"It was very curious, was it not, Winnie? By the way, let me introduce you two to each other. Mr. Melville, this is my cousin, Winifred Wyverne, and this, Winnie, is the old friend Jack Melville,

of whom you have sometimes heard my husband speak."

Jack looked surprised, and Winnie smiled and held out a little white hand.

"We ought to know each other without a formal introduction, Annie. Mr. Melville's name was once as familiar in my ears as household words! Aunt Joan—Mrs. Melville, you know—used often to talk of you," she went on, with a faint blush and smile, to Jack. "She fancied you resembled her husband, and I believe that was the reason," and she smiled again, and glanced up into Jack's good-looking face, "she passed over the Durham Melvilles, and made you her heir."

"Lucky for me! I have often wished to meet you, Miss Wyverne, to ask if you have forgiven me for turning you out of your old home," Jack said eagerly.

"Turning me out? Nay, I had no right there," Winnie said simply, "but I was very fond of the dear old house. It is so pretty and quaint, is it not, Mr. Melville?—worth a hundred modern houses! And is not the little oak room, with the sliding panels and the secret cupboard, where the Royalists hid from their enemies in the old old days, charming?"

Jack gave a deprecating smile and a shrug of his shoulders.

"I am afraid that I don't even know the room you speak of! You must honour me with a visit, Miss Wyverne, and introduce me to it, and tell me all the traditions of the house. Will you?"

"Perhaps, some day. I should like to see Melville Hall again," Winnie said in a musing tone.

"You have never been there since Mrs. Melville's death, have you, Winnie?" Mrs. Maxwell asked; and again Winnie blushed and laughed, and cast a comical, mischievous look at Jack.

"How could I, when there was no lady to invite me?" she said demurely; and then Doctor Maxwell entered, and the conversation was changed.

Jack went back to his hotel, charmed with his new friends. He had often longed to meet Winifred Wyverne, and now his wishes were realised. He had met her, and she was fifty times more charming than he had expected; her merry face and bright eyes seemed to float before his eyes as, having declined to use the carriage, he walked along the muddy streets to his hotel. Her sweet voice rang in his ears as he sat over the fire and smoked a meditative pipe before retiring, and mingled with

his dreams when at last, well into the small hours, he went to bed.

He saw her frequently during the next fortnight, and the time, which before had hung somewhat heavily on his hands, passed quickly enough as he escorted Mrs. Maxwell and Winnie to picture galleries, and theatres, and concerts, or rode with Winnie in the pleasant lanes, which still—though, alas! they are growing fewer and more remote day by day—still linger in the London suburbs. Before he returned home, he had succeeded in making Mrs. Maxwell, and her husband and cousin, promise to spend Christmas and the New Year with him at Melville Hall. Old Angélique had a lively time during the week which preceded their arrival. Jack, usually the most careless and least exacting of masters, had suddenly grown fidgety, and fussy, and nearly worried Angélique to death, with his endless instructions respecting the preparations for his guests.

"Now, are you quite sure that everything is just exactly as it used to be in Mrs. Melville's time, Angélique?" he said anxiously as, on the morning before Christmas Day, he looked into the long-unused drawing-room, where Angélique was taking the covers off the chairs and dusting the ornaments. "I don't want Miss Winifred to see any change. I want her to feel that she is coming home again; not to a strange house."

"Monsieur may depend upon me. Nothing is altered. I have given Miss Winifred the rooms which were hers before. Rest tranquil, Monsieur, she will be at home—soon;" and Angélique, who had now finished her work, flashed an amused look from her keen eyes at Jack, who was looking round with a somewhat dissatisfied expression.

What was it that the room lacked, he wondered? It looked painfully clean and prim, and unhomelike, and different to the pretty drawing-room in Cadogan Square. Flowers? Of course that was it—there were no flowers. Jack rushed out, and struck wrath and dismay into the soul of his Scotch gardener by ordering some of the best plants in the greenhouses to be sent into the house, and the choicest flowers to be cut for the vases. But, in spite of these additions, the room still lacked something to Jack's critical eyes. He found out what that something was, when, after dinner, he came with the Doctor into the room, and saw Winnie's lithe figure leaning back in a restful atti-

tude in a low chair by the fire. It was her presence he had missed, her presence which was needed to complete the scene. The room was perfect now, in Jack's eyes.

So Christmas came and went, the happiest Christmas Jack had ever known; and there were gay doings at the Hall. All Winnie's old friends came to welcome her back to her old home, and there was a constant succession of dinner parties and dances given in her honour. Doctor Maxwell returned home at the end of the week; but his wife and Winnie remained, at Jack's earnest entreaty, for a little longer. And, indeed, it was such an exquisite pleasure to Winnie to revisit the house she loved so well, and to meet her old friends, that the faint objections which she at first raised to the extension of the visit were easily overcome.

"I think it's quite time we were thinking of going home," she said to Mrs. Maxwell as they were sitting together in the drawing-room.

Jack had ridden over to the neighbouring town on business, and the two ladies were alone. The day was wet and stormy; no one had called, and they had spent a lazy, pleasant afternoon, gossiping by the drawing-room fire.

"Why this sudden determination, Winnie? I think you seem pretty well content with your present quarters," Mrs. Temple answered with a smile.

"So I am—too content, unfortunately." Winnie gave an answering smile; but it soon passed, and her face grew thoughtful. "If I remain much longer it will be as great a trial to leave as it was before; and I have no wish to suffer all that pain again."

"There is no need you should, my dear. You have but to say a few encouraging words, and Jack will invite you to remain here altogether," Mrs. Maxwell said quietly.

Winnie laughed, and coloured visibly.

"Nonsense, Annie! Jack is not a marrying man. We like each other, nothing more," she said carelessly. "I am glad the Hall has fallen into good hands, that he has not altered or modernised it. I love every stick and stone about the place; no other house will ever seem so much like home to me," she added thoughtfully.

She paused suddenly, and again the bright colour dyed her cheeks, for, as she said the last words, the door opened quickly, and Jack himself came in. His

face was flushed ; his eyes were shining ; there was a kind of triumph in his face as he crossed the room and stood on the hearth-rug, and looked down at Winnie. Had he overheard her last words, and, if so, what would he think of her ? With a little effort she looked up at him and smiled.

"How cold you look, and wet, too ! Will you have some tea, Mr. Melville ?" she said, with a little nervous accent in her clear voice.

"If you please."

Jack's hand touched hers as he took the cup, and his eyes rested on her fair face with a long admiring gaze. How pleasant it was to come home thus ; to find such a sweet welcome waiting for him ! All the way home, as he rode wet and cold through the muddy lanes, he had pictured it to himself—the pretty old-fashioned room, the bright fire, the pleasant hour between the lights, that hour which several times during the past week he had spent tête-à-tête with Winnie. This taste of home life was new and inexpressibly sweet to Jack after his wandering, lonely life. If it could only last—only go on for ever, he thought ! If he could, but keep her there with him always !

Mrs. Maxwell, who was the most obliging of chaperons, considerably left the room by-and-by. She had a forgotten letter to write which must be posted that night ; and she refused Jack's rather faint suggestion of lights, and went to her room to write it, leaving the two young people alone. They were both silent for a little while after the door closed. Winnie leant back in her chair with her pretty head resting against the dark velvet cushion and her hands clasped upon her knee, and Jack stood by the mantel-piece and watched her with a perfect contentment in his eyes. Winnie, looking up by-and-by, coloured vividly as she met his gaze, and her heart throbbed with a strange sensation—partly of delight and partly of nervous apprehension—which was quite new to her ; as a rule she was a very self-possessed young lady, but at that moment her mind was agitated by the fear that Jack might have overheard her remark to Mrs. Maxwell, and she felt unusually nervous and bashful, and half inclined to get up and leave the room.

"What o'clock is it ? Nearly time to dress for dinner, I suppose," she said at last, and she half rose from her chair.

Jack put his hand gently on her shoulder and pushed her back.

"You must not move for half-an-hour yet," he said in a quiet, authoritative voice. "This is the pleasantest hour of the whole twenty-four, and I am not going to be defrauded of it." He paused an instant, then said with an abruptness which almost took Winnie's breath away : "I have often wondered of whom you reminded me, Winnie, and I have only just found out. You are like my mysterious visitor !"

"Am I indeed ?"

Winnie started at the words, and cast a comical glance at him from under her dark lashes. "I thought you did not see her face !"

"I did not—not distinctly at least—but still you remind me of her. I wish I could get to the bottom of that mystery," Jack went on musingly. "I have had many strange experiences in my time ; but that certainly was the strangest and most unaccountable I ever came across, and I would give a good deal to solve its mystery."

"Would you ?"

Winnie gave a queer little smile. She glanced at him with an odd look of mingled amusement and doubt. "I too had a strange experience on last All Hallows' Eve," she said, with a little hesitation in her voice. "I have never told it to anyone because it was so silly and I felt such a fool," she laughed nervously. "I have never spoken of it even to Annie."

"Was it as strange as my experience ?"

"Quite, and much more unpleasant," Winnie answered with a little grimace. "Well, I will tell you then ; but first of all promise—promise solemnly"—and she put her hand on his arm, and looked at him earnestly, "that you will never breathe a word of it to anyone."

Jack laughed.

"Wild horses shall not drag it from me, Miss Winnie. Go on ; I swear inviolable secrecy."

"Well, then," and Winnie hesitated a moment, "this was how it happened. I was not very strong a year last October, and I came down to Whittlesea—you know the place, don't you ?—that little seaside village near Southport—for change of air. While there a great desire to see my old home again came over me. Whittlesea is only twenty miles from Melville Hall, you know ; so one afternoon, when my fit of homesickness was stronger than usual, I started off. It was evening when I reached the station, and I did not care to come to the Hall at that late hour, you see ;" and she

looked up at him and smiled. "I did not know what manner of person the new owner was, and whether or not I should be welcome, so I walked through the wood to the gamekeeper's cottage. His wife used to be my maid, and I knew she would take me in for the night. As I expected, she was delighted to see me, and, as her husband was away, we sat chattering over the fire till quite late about the village, and the people, and the changes which had taken place since I left the Hall. I went to bed about half-past ten; but for a long time I could not sleep. If you remember, it was a wild, stormy night, with a high wind, and showers of sleet and rain; and wind and rain together made such a noise that for a long time sleep was impossible. Then, as I lay awake and listened to the strange noises outside in the wood, I remembered what night it was, and all kinds of odd thoughts and fancies came into my mind. I thought of the stories old Angélique used to tell me; of the weird banquet which, on that night, she used yearly to spread; and I wondered if the rite was still observed, and if, as in the old days, the cloth was spread and the food and wine were waiting, and the doors thrown open to welcome the souls of the dead. I grew quite frightened at last at my own thoughts, and I tried to think of other things; and by-and-by, as I was very tired, I went to sleep."

"Go on."

Jack's eyes, full of eager interest, looked at her intently as she paused. He drew nearer to her on the hearth-rug.

"Oh, go on," he said.

Winnie laughed nervously.

"Now I am coming to the stupid part," she said. "Well, I went to sleep, and I had"—and she shuddered—"a dreadful dream. I dreamt that I was dead and buried in the churchyard, close by Aunt Joan; and as I lay in my coffin the grave opened and someone called my name. I looked up and saw Aunt Joan standing by me in her grave-clothes, and she touched me on the shoulder, and bade me rise and come with her to our old home. 'It is All Hallows Eve,' she said, 'and the doors will be open, and the bread and wine will be spread, and we shall be welcome. Come.' And it seemed to me that, all at once, while she spoke, the air grew full of phantom forms with pale, eager faces, and there was a confused murmur of voices as of many people talking together in low, hushed tones. I recognised some of the

faces. One, of a little child, who had died a few days before I left home; another, our doctor's wife. She had only been dead a year, and yet already he had forgotten her and taken another wife. I remember feeling so sorry for her, and wondering what she would say when she reached her home and found that her place was filled; that her children had forgotten her; and that there was no welcome for her there! 'Come,' Aunt Joan said; and it seemed to me that I rose, and we went together across the fields and up through the avenue. The gate was locked, but it opened at her touch, and so we reached the house. As we expected, the door was open, and side by side we crossed the hall, and entered the dining-room, and stood by the table, and ate and drank the food and wine which was waiting there." She paused again, and looked up at Jack's intent face. "Now, do you understand?" she said.

"I shall presently. Go on," Jack said quietly. "Tell me all."

"There is not much to tell. As we crossed the Hall again I stumbled on the threshold and hit my head against the lintel. I suppose the sudden shock and the pain awoke me, for I became suddenly conscious that I was standing on the door-step with bare feet, shivering in the cold wind. I must tell you that long ago, when I was a child, I had a bad habit of walking in my sleep. I had thought I was cured; but I suppose not being very well, and in an excited nervous mood, the old habit had returned again. Oh, it was horrible to wake and find myself there, and in that guise!" and she shuddered and turned pale at the thought. "As bewildered and confused I stood there, I heard a voice and a quick footstep—yours, I suppose—in the hall. I had sense enough to know that if I ran down the drive I should be seen and overtaken; so I crouched down behind the great laurel bush by the door and waited—sick and half fainting with terror, and excitement, and cold—till I heard the door shut and barred, and knew that I was safe. Then I ran back through the wood to the cottage. The door was wide open—left open by me, I suppose—and I got in and went to bed without anyone seeing me; and the next morning I was so ashamed of myself, and so afraid lest some one might have seen and recognised me, that I made Ellen promise to keep my visit a profound secret; and went back to Whittlesea by the first train. So now"—

and she smiled sweetly—"since I have made my confession and solved the mystery, please forgive my long silence, Mr. Melville, and remember your promise."

"And so it was you, after all!"

Jack laughed softly, and stroked his big beard as he looked at her. "If I had only known, what hours of doubt and perplexity would have been spared to me! Poor little girl! And to think of you standing outside in the cold," his voice grew very soft and tender, he bent over her, and touched her soft hair caressingly, "with the snow and the rain falling on these golden locks, and the cruel wind piercing you through and through! Oh, if I had only known, my darling, how gladly I would have taken you in, and warmed and fed you, and made you welcome!" Jack cried passionately.

Indeed, the vision which rose before his eyes of his beautiful, fragile sweetheart, crouching behind the laurel bushes, shivering with terror, and cold, and wet, was so terrible to him, that even though it had all happened so long ago, and had been followed by no lasting evil results, Jack's tender heart thrilled with pity, and love, and vain self-reproach.

"Oh, if I had only known!" he cried.

"I am very glad you didn't know," Winnie said, with a soft laugh. "I durst never have looked you in the face again, if you had found me! I should have wanted to run away somewhere to the end of the world, and hide myself from you for ever and ever! Oh, how relieved I was last All Hallows Eve—do you remember?—when you told Annie and me your strange story, and I was quite, quite sure that my secret was unknown to any one!"

"Of course I remember. I am not likely to forget that night. It was the first time we met, you know," Jack said quietly; and then the hand that had touched her hair so tenderly dropped a little lower and took her white fingers in its strong clasp. "What were you and Mrs. Maxwell talking about just as I came in, Winnie?" he went on with an excited thrill in his deep voice. "I heard one sentence—oh, how happy it made me, and how glad I was to hear it, my dear!—I heard you say that no other house would ever seem so much like home as this. It has never been really home to me till this last fortnight, till you came back to it, my darling. It shall never have another mistress but you, and it is dull being here alone. Say, when will you come back to it and me, Winnie?"

There was a short silence. Winnie did not speak, but she did not draw her hand away, and Jack saw by the bright firelight a happy, flushed face, with sweet, misty eyes, and lips which quivered with glad surprise. The eyes looked into his, the lips moved as if to speak, and, though no words came, Jack seemed quite content with the silent answer, and, bending, took it from her lips in a long, silent kiss.

Several All Hallows Eves have come and passed since then, and still at Melville Hall the cloth is laid, and the doors are opened, and the food and wine are spread, that the poor souls—if any there be about—may enter in, and find a welcome ready! Jack, rightly or wrongly, attributes the great happiness of his life to the observance of these mystic rites, and declares that it would be rank ingratitude on his part to omit them. So year by year the feast is spread, and Jack and his wife sit by the fire side by side, and, half in jest, and half in earnest, watch through the midnight hour for the spectral guests, who—so far—have persistently declined to come!

THE BRAES OF SURREY.

It is for the banks and braes, not of bonnie Doon, but of the equally bonnie Wey—which is far more accessible than the other from the regions of Mesopotamia—that we plan an autumn ramble. And yet it is not for any particular stream or river-side that we are bound; but for a district which shall henceforth be known as the braes of Surrey. For the brae, as we understand the word, is just the rough-and-tumble country which generally fringes the higher ranges of hills—and such is the character of our favourite district, only, in this case, the higher ranges are wanting. Yet you have the wildness and freedom of the hills, and the sweet and pure breezes, and that without having far to climb to reach them. Then you have wide heaths and commons, rich valleys, broad downs and lovely ravines, sunken lanes, arched over with elm or beech, with many a pretty copse and dell, and often a charming brook or rill.

Now, this land of the braes is marked out plainly enough in white and red—the white of the chalk-down, the red of the sand-hill—roughly, in the form of a triangle, of which the apex is Dorking, while

the base lies between Haslemere and Farnham, and the longest sides of the figure are some twenty miles in length, while the base is only eight or nine. Dorking itself, and the bold, romantic scenery of Boxhill and Burford Bridge, lie rather outside our limits; but Dorking may be taken as a starting-point, and the highway from that town to Guildford soon brings us through rough commons, and past beautifully wooded ravines, to the village of Wotton and its fine old church, secluded and sheltered at the foot of the hills, with noble old beech trees crowning the velvet glades and lawns. And at Wotton we are in the county of John Evelyn—the “Diarist” and author of “Sylva.” His tomb is in the north aisle of the chancel—he learnt his rudiments, he tells us, in the very porch of the old church. At Wotton House the veteran died, and he has left traces of his woodcraft in many fine clumps and groups of ancient trees. To the south and still among the braes, well wooded and intersected with pleasant rivulets, where picturesque old water-mills are perched upon the banks, lies Abinger, with its little Norman church; and lanes and bridleways lead through still and solemn avenues of fir and larch to the very summit of Leith Hill, with wild and windy passages where the feeling is of ascending some steep mountain-side; from the summit, where the hill breaks steeply into the Wealden country below, lies a prospect of wondrous extent and charm. The extreme horizon is bounded by the pure and beautiful outlines of the South Downs, some twenty miles distant, with all old Andred’s Weald between, now cultivated and cleared, with villages, spires, halls, and meres, and yet a woodland scene through all. Ockley lies just below, the Aclea of the Saxon chronicles; and there is Saint Leonard’s Forest and Shelley’s birthplace, and Horsham’s handsome tower, and folds and fields, and parks and woods innumerable.

Then turning your back upon the far stretching lowlands, if you find the hill-track which leads down to Shere, you arrive at one of the nicest little villages in England, with a handsome old church and a trout stream clear and brisk which flows through Albury Park, where once Henry Drummond the banker ruled, and wrote his innumerable pamphlets on “Currency,” and “The Church of New Jerusalem.” Close by is Albury with its little Cathedral of the

Irvingite Church; and from there a breather up the face of the down brings one to Newlands Corner, where there is a charming prospect—not extensive like that of Leith Hill, but more intimate—of all the country of the braes, even as far as Crooksbury on its western border, seen just over the flank of Saint Martha’s Hill, crowned by its solemn old chapel. A line of hills, too, fills the landscape like the waves of a flooding tide, and opposite are the hills we have crossed, with Blackheath—black enough under the shadow of a cloud—Hartwood, and Holmbury. Down among the woods is the Silent Pool, ruffled by no breath of wind, a perfect mirror of the secluded thickets round about. And if we follow the ridge of the down for awhile towards the setting sun, we may arrive at a scene of perfect enchantment, circles of old yews and aged thorns glowing with scarlet haws and coral berries, and yet dark and funereal, ghostly alike in winter and summer. Wonderful nooks, too, are there in the downs hereabouts, opening to the sun, warm and genial in the coldest season of the year; winter gardens, where the dark green foliage of the yew, and arbutus, and juniper is festooned with the skeleton blossoms of the “traveller’s joy,” or wild clematis. And these nooks are generally furrowed with the outlines of ancient dwellings and strewn with innumerable chips of flint.

In the valley again we come to Chilworth, all among ponds and streams, with powder mills and paper mills established here and there among the dense underwood. Then comes the pretty village of Shalford, and we strike upon the River Wey, as it comes winding through the valley; and then Catherine’s Chapel stands forth from its grassy knoll—for this way brings us in the cool of the evening to Guildford. And here ends the first division of the country of the braes; for the gap at Guildford seems to divide the district into two separate sections; each with its own particular sentiment and charm.

And to open the second series, we prefer to make an entry by Guildford. And if you reach that town by rail, there is nothing in the pleasant but featureless country you passed through after leaving Woking, to raise any expectations beyond the common. But having plunged beyond Guildford, into the tunnel which burrows right under the chalk-downs,

you emerge into what seems to be a quite different region. There is a glimpse of a charming little church in a fairy nook as you pass from one section of the tunnel to another; and then you are fairly in the land of the braes, hills all round, a lovely winding river, meadows greener than elsewhere, trees more luxuriant, old timber houses, with the gleam of white chalk-cliffs and the gloom of pine-clad heights.

Then comes Godalming, the metropolis of this country apart, where the station is all embordered in foliage, and where in early summer-time there is a continuous concert of feathered songsters. The river is down below, and whiffs of smoke and steam, and glimpses of old weather-boarded factories and breweries, remind one of some valley in Normandy, where there is a similar mingling of verdure and manufactures; but the town is apart from the factories, which occupy the valley, while the High Street, with its shops and houses, strange and quaint, in old-fashioned brickwork, curls round toward the hill. Godalming is like Rome, with its seven hills, or perhaps more. It is a little Switzerland you may fancy, when the mists hang about the hill-sides, as if they were hiding other heights beyond. Houses are dotted everywhere; the new Charterhouse shines conspicuously from its own particular height, while another summit seems devoted to the high scholastic staff. But wandering further afield, there is Hascombe, with its beeches; and Park Hatch, where you open the gate of the lowlands again; and Hambledon, with its heathy wilds. Wherever you go, you can hardly get far wrong as long as you keep within the confines of the Surrey Highlands. As you reach their limits, ever and again you get glimpses, through woodland openings, and over broken ground, of the wide Wealden plain, bits which our water-colour painters have made familiar.

Then you reach the country which is pre-eminently the artist's home—where quaintly devised houses and cottages stud the hill-side—Witley and Thursley, which are separated from Godalming by a wide and windy heath, where once a gibbet stood, and dead malefactors swung in chains. Hereabouts are traces of old iron-works, and hammer ponds contrived to keep up a head of water, to work the ponderous hammers of the iron founders. Beyond Thursley the country still assumes a still

wilder aspect; and the roads wind among a series of heights, which in certain lights assume a weird and menacing aspect. There is Hindhead, a really noble promontory, about which sometimes the clouds gather sublimely. To stand by the white cross at night on the summit of Hindhead, far away from human ken, while mists circle round and the night birds wail ominously, gives a shiver which is worth experiencing. The cross marks the place where three men were hung in chains for the murder of a sailor, down there in that darksome hollow, with the steep scarped sides, which is called the Devil's Punch Bowl. And the cross was erected by an English Judge of later days, as much in memory of the murderers as of the murdered. The grave of the sailor is down there in Thursley Churchyard, adorned by some country mason with a spirited sculpture, basso-relievo, of the murder; thus, at least, it struck the present writer, who saw it some years ago, one dark night, exploring among the tombs by the light of a lantern dimly burning.

Still keeping among the braes we reach the Devil's Jumps, three curious conical mounds, from one to the other of which His Majesty is said to have hopped when caught by returning daylight at his work in the Punch Bowl. Beyond is Frensham, with its great pond some three miles round, with plenty of fish among its reedy pools, a resort of wild fowl in the winter. And then we reach Tilford, lying in an elbow of the river Wey, with an ancient stone bridge and a famous old village green, with a mighty oak in the centre, beneath which King John is said to have rested when on progress through these regions.

Crooksbury seems to command all this neighbourhood—a conical summit crowned with firs, at the foot of which may be found Moor Park, where Sir William Temple once paced the formal gardens, attended by his secretary, one Jonathan Swift.

Stella's cottage is not far off—for Stella was a daughter of one of Sir William's bailiffs—in a charming nook of the river, too, close by Waverley Abbey, the chief settlement of the Cistercians in England.

From this neighbourhood we get a full view of the long, narrow hill which bounds our country on the north: a hill, like a wall built by giant hands, straight as a ruler and running right on end

for some eight miles, a perfect knife edge of chalk, cut out in the strange perpendicular fashion by who can say what natural causes. A road crowns the hill from one end to the other, with a fine panoramic view on either hand.

It is a relief to descend by a cutting into one of the pleasant villages which lie under its shelter—Puttenham, or Compton, with its curious ancient church, and its double chancel, arch over arch. There is a church at Puttenham, too, as the writer well remembers, being at service there one sleepy Sunday afternoon. It was in the heat of the Franco-Prussian War, and the sermon had reference to the fearful drama then being acted in the fair land of France; and, indeed, there was to be a collection in aid of the fund for assistance to the wounded on both sides. Our parson gave a very graphic description of the siege of Paris. You could hear the guns thundering and see the shells hurtling through the air this quiet Sunday afternoon—one shell in particular—as you followed the preacher's hand describing its curve as it finally dropped into the pulpit cushion. At the same moment there was a tremendous crash, followed by piercing cries. The scene was becoming too realistic. But it was only a little Sunday-school girl, who had tumbled backwards off a form.

Last stage of all is Farnham, which lies just a little outside our limits. And yet a very little; for if a cannon were fired from Guildford along the crest of the Hog's Back, it may be believed that the ball would go on rolling and rolling, the road being a smooth and good one, till it plumped into Farnham town. But it is quite a foreign town to us dwellers among the brass. The hops and the hop-gardens, and the hop-kilns, square and new—they are not so pretty as the old Kentish hop-kilns, or oast-houses, with their conical roofs and great white cowls; but all this seems foreign to us, and so are the soldiers, and the smart officers and the stylish officers' wives, on foot, on horse-back, in coquettish little tax-carts.

Yes, all this is strange and foreign. Sturdy old Cobbett, who sleeps in the churchyard there, under a tombstone as square and sturdy as himself, would hardly recognise the quiet country town, where he was born and reared, among those rural sights and sounds, which ring so charmingly in his works every now and then. But there is little chanced in the

Castle, that ancient stronghold of the militant Bishop of Winchester; when its noble avenues of beeches are turning russet red once more; and when the hops have been garnered in, and the last pocket of the golden beauties, all fragrant as a nosegay, has been despatched to the Borough.

"CLOSER THAN A BROTHER."

By G. B. STUART.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IX—MOTHERLY CONFIDENCES.

It is not to be supposed that Mr. Bulteel's return from Australia to his rightful home had passed without comment from "the county," among whose ranks the Bulteel family had always held its own; the neighbouring gentry had all called and left their cards on the new Squire, and had offered him such entertainment as his recent mourning admitted of. The news of the fire spread even more rapidly than the flames themselves had done, and brought a fresh influx of visitors to Bulteel: everyone was anxious to have the rights of the rescue story. Was it really true that Mr. Bulteel had pulled out with his own hands a dozen sleepers from their burning beds? Or, as another version had it, had he saved the family plate and jewel safe by a superhuman exhibition of strength and courage at the last moment, as the roof fell in ruins about him? Anyhow he was the hero of the hour; and if he did not enjoy the position, his stepmother did so thoroughly. Every afternoon Mrs. Bulteel established herself in the big drawing-room, which had been reopened since the destruction of the boudoir, and awaited possible callers in the freshest of "Marie Stuart" caps, and the most elaborate of jet ornaments, a combination of effects which robbed her widow's dress of all its sombreness.

A great square sofa was drawn up on one side of the fire; Mrs. Bulteel's own little wicker table with its novels, its scent-bottle, its nosegay of hothouse flowers, its hundred-and-one necessities, stood close beside it; and here Mrs. Bulteel was to be found on these sunny April afternoons, dozing a little now and then, with her black satin shoes tucked under a white fleecy shawl, or waking up with a pleased start, and two hurried hands to the coquettish widow's cap, if the big bell at the front door clanged through the house.

Sometimes the visitors were gentlemen who asked for Mr. Bulteel; but they were invariably shown into the drawing-room, according to Mrs. Bulteel's injunctions; Mr. Bulteel could be sent for; but she would not have the library invaded, when Dr. Morton had particularly ordered that he was to keep quiet as long as there was any danger of inflammation for the injured arm.

John was generally unearthed from his seclusion to find his stepmother laughing and chatting with an impromptu afternoon party; he had even caught the expression, "my big son," and knew that Mrs. Bulteel must be advancing her favourite hypothesis that she and her stepson were about the same age, which, as John was known to be five-and-thirty, gave his stepmother a decided push backward. He felt himself dreadfully out of place on these occasions, and would stand in obvious martyrdom while some county magnate, or, worse still, some magnate's wife, cross-questioned him on the subject of the fire, and, finding his version differed considerably from those already in circulation, contrived to make him aware that he ought to have behaved as heroically as they had imagined, that, in fact, he had been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

The way in which they generally wound up, "Oh, is that all? I understood that it had been very much more serious!" left poor John with an uncomfortable idea, that he ought to have encouraged rather than have extinguished the fire; and he had not the necessary powers of conversation to turn the subject with a joke, or a repartee.

The dowagers were scarcely less terrible than their daughters, tall, blooming young ladies, for the most part, with plumed hats that added quite a cubit to their already important stature; they were quite ready to be friendly with their new neighbour, whose arm in a sling, not to speak of his reputed adventures, and their satisfactory termination on the hereditary acres, appealed to their sympathies; but somehow they did not come up to the "Wambo Ideal," as May had once mockingly called it, and, in spite of their best efforts, made little way with the new Squire of Bulteel. How were they to get on with a man who was utterly ignorant of the commonest topics of the day; who, in spite of a large landed estate, failed to shudder at the Irish Home Rule Bill, or the mention of Mr. Henry George; who knew as little of

popular actors as he did of fashionable preachers; who, in fact, was as completely "out of it," as if he were still raising his sheep in Queensland? The mothers and daughters, as they drove home in their immense barouches, agreed that Mr. Bulteel would be very little addition to their society, "unless he opens out unexpectedly," a saving clause which they insinuated, in order to cover any change of front, should he begin to pay marked addresses to anybody's girls. The young men discovered that he knew a horse when he saw one, but were astounded to find that this fact did not "make" him conversationally; indeed, John, with his anxious notions of what was or was not a fitting topic of conversation, would as soon have thought of discussing his boots in public, as his stables. So his presence, though it added a lustre, also contributed a certain restraint to Mrs. Bulteel's gatherings; she always kept one eye upon her stepson, and one ear strained to catch anything he might say, while she volubly explained to old Lady Blatherwick or Colonel Grabham, what a comfort it was to have a gentleman in the house again; how she had longed to bring about dear John's restitution; and how often he reminded her, in little things, of her dear husband.

There was one ceremony on these occasions which John had acquired to perfection, and always performed with alacrity—the ringing of the drawing-room bell, and the subsequent speeding of the parting guests to their carriages, when the talking and tea-drinking came to an end.

"What sort of a figure should I cut in a drawing-room?" John Bulteel had once said to his partner at Wambo; and the Squire recollected this speech with a rueful smile as he came back to the drawing-room after showing out the last of his guests, the Rev. Charles Haddington, who, as Vicar of the parish, had come to pay a congratulatory visit after the fire, and had sat for nearly two hours without attempting to address the gentleman of the house.

"I suppose they all think me a lout, and they are not far wrong. I wonder how long I shall stick to it? I don't seem to improve, and I certainly haven't begun to enjoy it yet! A good tussle with 'Snow-storm' in the Park, and that fight with the fire the other night, are the two pieces of gratification which I have got out of Bulteel so far. A confession that would surprise the Vicar, with his twaddle about the Latin cut of the new surplices and the

shade of purple best adapted for book-markers in Lent! I wonder if he is a man, or I? whether two natures, as utterly distinct as ours, are to be weighed—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Bulteel, I did not catch what you said."

"I was saying how devoted, how earnest Mr. Haddington always is in all he undertakes."

"Yes; he seems anxious enough to get the right kind of ribbons."

"He told me he had written three times to the Ecclesiastical Emporium, as well as to the School of Art, and they weren't right then."

"Indeed! I wonder he could spare so much time for mere visiting with such an important affair on hand."

"It's quite settled now," Mrs. Bulteel assured him triumphantly. "He showed me a little pattern of the silk; it is being made specially at Coventry for the purpose. Such a lovely purple! No one else has seen it but myself; and it is to be ready by Palm Sunday. He knows how we all sympathise here with his work."

"To be sure," John answered gravely. He perceived that his stepmother liked talking about the Vicar, and a sudden illumination prompted him to ask: "You don't think he comes here for any special purpose, do you?"

"My dear John, what special purpose could he have?"

"Oh, I didn't know. I thought, perhaps, as he sat so long, he was waiting for May to come in."

"May! Oh, dear no! You are quite mistaken. I am sure he only takes the most fatherly interest in May." Mrs. Bulteel grew quite pink in her endeavours to disabuse John of this absurd idea. "Mr. Haddington isn't at all the sort of person to be taken with a young girl. I know him so well; and I have often heard him speak of the charm and repose of early middle age. He likened it, I recollect, so poetically to the bloom on——"

"I'm going to look for May; it's time she was back," John said, cutting short his stepmother's reminiscences.

"Oh, stop a minute," pleaded Mrs. Bulteel, "it is so seldom I get you alone, John, and I do so want to have a little private talk about May. Has she said anything to you about leaving Bulteel?"

"No, nothing; and I sincerely hope she won't."

"I knew you'd say that; you are so

considerate, John. But, of course, you have guessed darling May's little secret!"

"No, I haven't." John had been fidgeting to be off; but now he came back to the hearth-rug and took up his position there as if he knew Mrs. Bulteel was "in" for a long story. "But if it is a secret, you had better not tell it to me." Yet his voice had an anxious ring in it, which had been absent when he spoke of Mr. Haddington and his bookmarkers.

"Oh," said Mrs. Bulteel, "there is no harm in letting you behind the scenes a little; lookers-on see the most of the game, they say," with a simper; "but I fancy, with gentlemen this scarcely holds good, they so often seem quite unaware of the little romances which are being played right in front of them. Is it possible that you have not observed that dear May and Arthur Twisden have a liking for each other?"

"Is that so?"

"Why, it has been going on ever since they were boy and girl together; before even I came to Bulteel; so, as I often told your dear father, I was not accountable for it."

"Are they engaged then?"

"Softly, softly, my dear John. You would have us 'woo'd, and married, and a' in your rapid Colonial fashion; but there are little difficulties, sometimes, as to ways and means, which even clip Cupid's wings."

"What are they in this case?"

"Well, you know, most people looked on May as her father's heiress, and, though old Taper knew that the will was in your favour, I don't suppose he ever mentioned the subject to Arthur; consequently, it must have been a great surprise and a certain disappointment—you'll excuse me, I know—when you returned to inherit here. Arthur has to make his way in the world, and he might not like to ask May to leave such a home as Bulteel until his position was more assured. She has her own three hundred a year, to be sure; but that is not much in comparison with her expectations when you were distant and in disgrace. I think this makes her restless, and just a tiny bit unsatisfied, and has suggested the idea of a separate home——"

"But I have always understood that had I died, or, had my father chosen after all to disinherit me, Bulteel would have gone to the Warwickshire branch—a parson, I believe—with whom the Squire

quarrelled furiously—according to Twisden—and to whom I am indebted for my inheritance as much as to anybody. It appears the Squire hated him even more than he did me!"

"Oh, hush!" cried Mrs. Bulteel, scandalised; "you mustn't say such things, you really mustn't! Your father never had the slightest intention of leaving the property to Mr. James Bulteel, who is an old man and a bachelor, as well as an invalid, who would not thank you for bothering him with a landed estate. At least, after our marriage, there was never any idea of eventually disinheriting you, and, as time went on, your father perceptibly softened, and allowed himself to be swayed to a great extent by me"—a polite fiction which had grown up since the Squire's demise—"but the supposition still lingered in many people's minds that May would be a great heiress, and would get all the funded property which could be separated from the estate. I daresay this would have been the case, at least to a more considerable extent, had not your father kept an eye upon you, through Mr. Taper, and learnt that you were doing remarkably well in Queensland, and making money."

John had for some moments been impatiently teasing the fire with the poker, though to all appearances it was satisfactory enough; at this juncture, he contrived to dislodge an immense lump of coal, which fell with a clatter, spluttering sparks and dust in every direction; Mrs. Bulteel shrieked, and clutched at her "Eau de Portugal," and John began raking out the grate, and repairing the damage with all the fire-irons at once.

"Then it is a pity I ever left Queensland," he remarked, having built up the fire again. "I was at home there, which I shall never be in England, and I interfered with nobody's prospects, matrimonial or pecuniary."

"You must not speak like that," Mrs. Bulteel said peremptorily, having succeeded thoroughly in her object, "or I shall regret having spoken at all on this subject. But I thought that May might say something to you about leaving Bulteel, and I would speak to you first, that you might understand that it was just a little natural

girlish restlessness which would pass off by-and-by."

"She really loves Twisden, then?"

"Why, didn't you guess that from her wish to drive into Barkham the other evening? What else could have induced her, but to see a little more of Arthur? Ah, John, it is plain to see you have never been in love, or you would know the signs of it more quickly: wait a bit till your own time comes!"

Some stupid people thought Mrs. Bulteel perfectly insufferable, when she put on airs of archness; others, Mr. Haddington among them, thought that no mood became her so admirably, and in the latter opinion she herself concurred heartily.

"How hot this room is, and how warm you both look!" said May, coming in from her School of Art lesson, her cheeks pink from the evening air, and her hair tossed a little by the wind; she pulled off her cloth jacket as she spoke, and the little bunch of violets which she always wore at her neck, jumped from their button-hole and fell at John's feet.

"Do you want these?" he asked, picking them up.

"Not a bit—but they are dead—I have worn them all day. Why don't you tell Macpherson to send you in a proper button-hole every evening if you care for flowers?" for her brother was fastening them in his coat, a little crushed bunch tied with a morsel of yellow silk.

"These are good enough for me," he said.

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXX.

SINCE she had pleased her uncle by yielding to the young man's pleading, Tilly now pleased herself by paying another visit to Fulham.

Between her and Uncle Bob there still lay the unforgotten scene on the night of John's last visit, unforgotten, perhaps impossible to be forgotten by either of them, because it was wrapped in an unworded silence. Only once had he again alluded to the matter, and it was to say, with a kind of triumphant violence, "He never denied it; if he could have cleared himself, do you think he would have gone off like that, with never a word?"

"Do you think that that was the reason of his silence?" she said, with a kind of grieving wonder for his blindness.

She had sought the ring till it grew to be half a habit to open the same boxes and drawers with a dull hopelessness that looked for no relief. It was not found. She had advertised its loss, and offered a large reward for its recovery; she had instituted enquiries at the jeweller's; and all without result. These steps were the first of any importance she had ever taken without her uncle's knowledge and sanction, and they lay a little guiltily on her conscience. The advertisement was so worded that he might probably have glanced at it and found nothing in it to concern him, even if he had ever read anything else in the newspaper save the column devoted to the state of the money-market; she was not, therefore, afraid of his anger, but she

grieved that she could not openly defend John; that she could not wipe out the remembrance of this dividing coldness.

The ring was lost, and John, seemingly, was lost with it, as far as his uncle was concerned.

There was a rugged obstinacy in Mr. Burton, which you came upon at times, as you do upon a rock which hides beneath green sward. It had been his delight to do all things for Tilly, and hardly once in all their comradeship had he crossed her; and yet—just once or twice—in cases the better remembered because of their extreme rarity, she had come upon this native doggedness, and had known that, even for her, it was immovable. She never blamed him for it, and even in some tender, womanly way, she justified him in her thoughts.

But, though she justified her uncle, she grieved for her cousin with some of the indignation at unfairness which she might have felt if she had been a boy; John had not had justice meted out to him; he had been condemned and sentenced untried. How she managed at one and the same time to believe in the accused, and exonerate his judge, is a mystery which can be only understood by women.

She had never been forbidden to go to Fulham, and, accepting this as an implied permission, she set out one day soon after her engagement. That event made a plea in her eyes. She would go and tell Jessie—so she said to herself; but, in reality, it was John she meant to surprise by the tidings.

Fred was not with her; he was at the office, supposed to be examining the merits of a new invention for sewing on the soles of boots, but in reality, swearing—perhaps even audibly—at the hardness of fate that kept him a prisoner within four

walls, when every wandering breath of spring was whispering :

Come hither, ye gallants ! come hither, ye maids !
To the trim gravelled walks, to the shady arcades.

There were two or three things which disquieted Tilly, besides the estrangement between her uncle and cousin. For one thing, it made her sad to pass those great prison-houses of suffering which line the Brompton end of the Fulham Road. A great deal of anguish is crowded here into the limits of a very short street ; behind those mute walls what a sad companionship of sorrow and suffering there is.

The great houses of the rich come very near to these—great houses too, but full of poverty and sickness. Tilly hung her head as she went by. She was going to a great house too ; a house where more money was to be spent, and wasted, and flung away ; where moreshow, and grandeur, and pleasure, and satiety were to be grasped than in any other house around. She could not be young, and of a feeling heart, and not be sharply stirred by the contrast. The great house burdened her in anticipation ; she had already gone with her uncle to look at one or two of the palaces reserved for lordly incomes ; for Mr. Behrens had advised this preliminary step towards future splendour. Uncle Bob would have preferred to make his fabulous sum first ; but this argument his friend had met by pointing out that he was already an extremely rich man, and might as well have the look of it.

Now for the first time Uncle Bob was made to understand that a boarding-house is not—well, is not a place where nobility and gentry—not even members of parliament, and officers of crack regiments—do congregate.

"What have I got to do with them !" he asked rather sullenly, classing them all in his jealous fancy as a "beggary stuck-up crew."

"Nothing," said Behrens lightly ; "only you are infinitely more able than any of them to keep up an establishment, and you might give them a lesson as to how it should be done."

This view struck Uncle Bob as pleasing and sensible ; but a lingering doubt which belonged to the past rather than the future stuck in his mind.

"Is a boarding-house the wrong thing ?" he demanded.

"It has served its turn very well."

"It is a place where you would take your own wife and girl !" he continued in relentless catechism.

"Why not !" said Behrens, thinking with a hidden smile of humour of his wife's reception of any such suggestion on his part. "If I were a half-pay Indian officer or a poor literary man, or even the widow of a deceased divine, I should no doubt find it an excellent way of living."

"But not if you were me !"

"Not if I were you."

"Why did you let us go to one then !" Mr. Burton asked with some natural resentment.

"I, my dear friend !" Behrens raised his brows smilingly. "I think it was Miss Burton's wish, was it not ?—and that is law. It did excellently as a temporary step ; but now that your transactions are becoming marked, I should advise a more imposing address."

From that hour her uncle burned to quit Madame Drave's roof ; and all the moments he could spare from the City were spent in a critical review of houses which should be large and grand enough to wipe out the disgrace of having stooped to be a boarder. Tilly was very tired of it all ; of the long stairs, the vast rooms, and the ghostliness of the uninhabited dwellings. She did not at all mind being a boarder ; her distrust of Madame Drave had lost the keenness of its edge, and for the other inhabitants of the house she had none but kindly feelings. Life in a mansion, with Uncle Bob for ever immersed in business, presented itself to her as rather arid and monotonous ; and she suffered pangs of dismay as she foresaw herself, as in a vision, enthroned in solitary state and so hedged about with hired service that she could not even be permitted to button her own boots. As for hailing an omnibus, the days of that vulgar delight would be numbered : probably she would also have to blot Fulham out of her knowledge as a spot too ungenteel to be mentioned in polite society.

Oddly enough, as she went on her way, she never once thought of Fred, who was thinking of her, depend on it, to the detriment of that new machine for the soles of boots ; Fred was eagerly anticipating the evening when he was to meet her at the Claverings.

The Claverings were a great deal more fashionable than little Mrs. Popham ; but they were not nearly so rich. They were comparatively poor, indeed, and their graciousness to Tilly was partly based on the rumours which had reached them of her uncle's wealth. Where there are portionless daughters and sons who have to

carve their own path in life, parents come almost by instinct to choose acquaintances for their possible future or present usefulness; and a man of millions has vast possibilities of usefulness.

Fred's value came in as a dancing, and talking, and extremely presentable young man; and he knew it. He was not expected to fall in love with either of the three daughters; and he knew that too. He laughed when he pictured the surprised reception those prudent friends of his would give to the announcement of his engagement, and the upward bound he would take in their esteem; and then he sighed to remember that there were many other dancing, and talking, and presentable young men to be met at their receptions, who might possibly be even more dangerous to his peace than the writing fraternity Mrs Popham had desired to honour.

When Tilly got to the little house at Fulham, she was no longer allowed to forget her engagement. It was thrust at her—almost flung at her—by Jessie, who spoke of it with a passionate scorn which shook her slender frame.

"Why have you come back?" she said, when her cousin looked in on her radiantly. "Have you come to taunt me, to fling your prosperity in my face? I never sought you out or desired to know you. Why do you obtrude your life upon mine? Is it to make the contrast between it and yours the sharper?"

"Jessie! Jessie!" said Tilly, with pain in her voice.

She stood near the door, where she had been arrested by these thunderbolts, without self-possession enough to advance. Jessie had struggled up to a sitting posture on the old sofa where she had been lying; one hand feverishly clasped the back, and with the other she waved the visitor away.

"Go, go," she said; "I can't bear the sight of you. Isn't it enough for you to be rich and beautiful, while I am poor, and ugly, and sickly. Must you come to triumph over me in your love too? Couldn't you have spared me even that? Must you take everything—everything—"

Her voice sank into a wail.

"Jessie——" Tilly began again; but at the last murmured words her burning, consuming sense of indignation and disgust died out in an amazed pity. She had been wrapping her soul in haughty reserve. She had meant to go; to leave without a

word; but now, of a sudden, she found her heart melting. All at once, as in a flash, little unnoticed scenes came back and made a continuous picture, in which Jessie's poor pitiful story was plainly outlined. She remembered the unfailing bitterness with which she had spoken of Fred; her questions about him; her persistent return to his name. It was love which was half hate in the intensity of its hopelessness, and in the shame that it had come unbidden and unprized.

It takes a very sound and sweet nature to rejoice in another's prosperity, even when that prosperity does not infringe on any right of our own, or leave us the poorer; but to be glad when some good, for which we have longed, however hopelessly, is appropriated by another, takes a measure of mental and moral healthfulness which few of us can claim.

Tilly, who had a strongly-developed sense of justice, would doubtless have remembered this, even if she had been without that illuminating glimpse into the secret places of Jessie's soul; she would have told herself, too, that, in that mysterious union of mind and body, the one cannot be sick without the other suffering; but all these justifications were forgotten in the largeness of her pity. She hung her head; she was ashamed; she felt as if she, who had everything, had coveted and possessed herself of another's poor store of joy. She had not a word to say.

"Ah," said Jessie, mistaking these signs, "you may well hang your head; you have befooled an honest man than Fred Temple—your lover—with your smiles and your words. I suppose it pleases you to steal hearts, and then throw them away when you tire of them. What do I know about it? I know that you have brought nothing but sorrow and trouble to this house. Go away and marry Fred; he will not make a good husband. I have known him all his life. He will not beat you," she laughed with a mirthless bitterness that made Tilly thrill and quiver, "but he will neglect you; he will tire of you; he is marrying you for your money, and not for your pretty face, and your gracious ways. Perhaps he doesn't tell you that, but I tell you. He is deep in debt; he has been dunned for months. For awhile he had to disappear; to go into hiding, because he was afraid of being disgraced. Do you know what that means—you, who have always been rich? I daresay he would tell you that he had gone on a plea-

sant trip abroad ; John knew where he was hiding—you can ask him. John gave him half our year's income—our handsome income which could be so easily halved—to tide him over till he could arrange a compromise with his creditors. Perhaps he will repay us when he marries you. I daresay he will pay everybody then. Think what it must have been to him to meet with a rich heiress, quite ready to marry him, just when everything was at its blackest ; when he was glad to come to us, to this poor little house which he has always despised !

"Oh, it is a great thing for him ! He will spend your money splendidly ; it will suit him well ; but he will neglect you, and he will despise your uncle who made him rich. There ; now you know what the lover you came to taunt me with is. There are other things—but what do you and I know of them ? I have told you enough."

She fell back on her cushions exhausted ; the flush of passion faded from her cheeks and left a deadly pallor ; her eyes closed, as if she would shut out Tilly for evermore from her consciousness.

Every one of the short, breathless sentences flung at Tilly had struck her like the blow of a hammer. Her thoughts were a chaos. One moment she recoiled in quivering disgust—the next she was overwhelmed with a black pall of shame. It was mostly shame—deep, shocked, shrinking shame—before this pitiable picture of a love which, being unreturned, perhaps smilingly and amusedly spurned, had fed itself at the poisonous fountains of hate, and thus took its poor revenge.

It was no moment for words, protestations, justifications. These fell far short of the need, and were wholly inadequate ; indeed, in the physical prostration which was the reaction after that burst of excited passion, Jessie probably would not have heard them.

Tilly turned silently away. For a few moments her limbs shook, and she moved unsteadily ; but when she reached the outer air she recovered strength and walked away quickly.

She walked all the way home, unconscious of the curious looks turned upon her as she went steadily and swiftly, but with no outward vision for the life and bustle of the streets. She was seeing inwardly, living over again every moment of that shameful scene. She did not believe those dark accusations against her lover ; she was too young, too generous, too fair-

minded. Perhaps she repelled them the more eagerly because she felt that the indignant love which would have scorned to lend an ear had failed. She had listened ; she was listening now. Over and over again she heard those angry sentences barbed with gall.

"He is marrying you for your money. He will neglect you ; he will despise the man who made him rich."

Again and again she recognised with a dull, pained wonder that they had not lost their power to wound, though she had refused them her belief.

And with them came other remembered phrases, which she resisted with an eagerness which unconsciously quickened her steps. She would not give them audience ; she thrust them from her ; but, when she refused to listen to them, they seemed to write themselves in letters of fire before her.

Whose heart had she wounded ? whose peace had she destroyed ?

"It is not true ; it is not true."

That was her answer to both accusations.

"It is not true." She repeated it till the refrain became as monotonous as the tread of her hastening feet on the pavement, and its very repetition seemed to lend it force.

But when faith needs so much propping to make it stand upright, we may guess pretty shrewdly that the inletting of doubt is not far off.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

NOVEMBER.

NOVEMBER obtains its name through having been the ninth month of the Romans, and originally consisted of thirty days. Julius Cæsar added an additional day, which, however, was afterwards taken away by Augustus. The Saxons called the month Blot Monath—blood month—either because of the number of cattle slaughtered at this season for their winter store, or for the purpose of sacrificing to their deities. They also called it Wint Monath, or wind month, from the blustering winds which prevail during the month. The Romans dedicated the month to Diana, keeping the "Banquet of Jupiter," and solemnising the Circensian Games upon the first day of November. This day was likewise a grand thanksgiving, or day of rest, among the Druids, corresponding to their high solar festival on May Day.

The precious stone devoted to this

month was the topaz, and searchers after the curious are told that

Who first comes to this world below,
With drear November's fog and snow,
Should prize the topaz's amber hue—
Emblem of friends and lovers true.

The unlucky days are spread all over the month, beginning with the fifth and ending with the twenty-ninth. In addition to these, there are the sixth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and twenty-eighth.

Coming to weather lore we find that

'Tween Martinmas and Yule
Water's wine in every pool.

If there's ice in November that will bear a duck,
There'll be nothing at Christmas but sludge and muck.

If the wind is in the south-west at Martinmas
It remains there till after Christmas.

Expect St. Martin's Summer, halcyon days.

Right through the month of November we have a long series of saints' days and festivals, some associated with solemnity and others with pleasure.

The first of these and the first day of the month is All Saints' Day. This was designed to be held in honour of all those saints who had not particular days appointed for them. It does not appear at any time to have been marked by very particular ceremonies in the Catholic Church, though there is very good grounds for believing that it took the place of a Pagan feast.

On the coasts of the Baltic, fishermen never use their nets between All Saints' Day and St. Martin's Day, because they believe that if they did, they would have miserable catches all the year afterwards.

Amongst customs observed in England on this day may be mentioned that connected with the Lordship of Apse, in Surrey. The Lord of the Manor had to give away, by the terms of his tenure, a cake of ale on All Saints' Day, "for the soul of the King and his ancestors!"

The day following (November the second) was known to our ancestors, as it is known to us, as All Souls' Day, which was a very solemn festival of the Romish Church. There are still performed masses and ceremonies for the repose of the souls of the dead.

It was formerly the custom on this day to eat a peculiar kind of cake. The custom originated with our Catholic ancestors, with whom it was a custom to bake on All Hallow E'en, a cake for every soul in the house, which cakes were eaten on All Souls' Day. The poor people used to go round begging for some cakes or anything to

make merry with on this night. Their petition consisted in singing a doggerel sort of rhyme:

A soul cake, a soul cake;
Have mercy on all Christian souls,
For a soul cake,
A soul cake.

In Cheshire on this night they once had a custom called "Hob Nob," which consisted of a man carrying a dead horse's head covered with a sheet to frighten people. This head, carried by the Soulers, is typical of St. Martin, who is always represented on a horse, the emblem in Christian Art of courage and generosity.

Brady tells us that Odillon, Abbot of Cluny, in the ninth century, first enjoined the ceremony of praying for the dead on this day in his own monastery; and the like practice was partially adopted by other religious houses until the year 998, when it was established as a general festival throughout the Western Churches. To mark the pre-eminent importance of this festival, if it happened on a Sunday it was not postponed to the Monday, as was the case with other such solemnities; but kept on the Saturday, in order that the Church might the sooner aid the suffering souls; and, that the dead might have every benefit from the pious exertions of the living, the remembrance of this ordinance was kept up by persons dressed in black, who went round the different towns ringing a loud and dismal-toned bell at the corner of each street every Sunday evening during the month, and calling upon the inhabitants to remember the deceased suffering the expiatory flames of purgatory and to join in prayer for the repose of their souls.

One of the most romantic stories of that romantic country, Wales, and one which finds its counterpart in almost every country in the world, is the story of Saint Winifred and her well. It is a story of licentious love and crime, and the story of the miraculous power of a holy man. Tradition rather than history has handed down the fact that Winifred, a transcendently beautiful maiden, was the daughter of Temice ap Elwedd. On a certain day in the year 630 A.D., her parents went to church to hear Saint Beuno preach, leaving their daughter at home by herself. In the meantime Prince Caradoc, a bold bad man, and ruler of North Wales, came along, and seeing Winifred, became enamoured with her. She, to escape him, ran with all her speed towards the church. Caradoc followed, and succeeded in overtaking the

maiden, whose head he struck from her shoulders with the sword he carried. The trunkless head rolled down the hill, right into the church, to the consternation of the people assembled. The good Bishop Beuno jumped out of the pulpit, picked up the head, and running to the trunk fastened the head on it again, when Winifred became as right as ever. At the place where the head ceased rolling a little pool of blood was left; but from some miraculous agency this was transformed into a stream of sparkling water, which exists at the present day under the name of Saint Winifred's Well, and is noted for the remarkable cures which in times past have been wrought there. Caradoc, tradition asserts, died on the very spot where he had committed the foul crime, and his body was borne away by the Evil One. Winifred, on the other hand, was so rejoiced at the miracle wrought on her behalf, that she took the veil and ultimately became Abbess of Gwytheryn, Denbighshire, and died in the odour of sanctity. Subsequently she was canonized by the reigning Pope, and the third of November was appointed as the day on which to commemorate her virtues. The spring is undoubtedly one of the finest in Wales, and will throw up twenty-one tons of water per minute. It never freezes, and is always the same in quantity, whether in rain or drought.

Many have been the pious pilgrimages made to this well by devout Catholics, and indeed, until the suppression of convents and monasteries, it was always thronged with crowds of devotees anxious to have a dip in the mysterious well. Reverting back to the saint herself, it is said that, on the occasion of her second death, she was buried in the convent; but in the reign of King Stephen, some monkish body-snatchers managed, by a little finessing, and not a little fibbing, to get possession of her remains and to carry them to Shrewsbury, where the bones are still supposed to lie, near the high altar of the Abbey. It is also recorded by tradition, that wherever the body rested on the journey wells bubbled up, and one is instanced at Woolston, near Westfelton, between Oswestry and Shrewsbury, said to be dedicated to Saint Winifred, the waters of which were deemed to be good for sore eyes.

Reverting back to the well, we are told by a local guide that on the eleventh of June, 1731, a wager was laid to decide the

flow, and the parson of the parish appears to have acted as umpire. The record of this, copied from an old pamphlet, is as follows:

"By the gauge the basin will hold about two hundred and forty tons of water, which, when emptied, is filled again in two minutes. The experiment was tried to decide a wager, in the presence of Mr. Price, Rector of Holywell, Mr. Williams, Mr. Wynne, Dr. Taylor, and others, when, to the surprise of the company, the well filled in less than two minutes, which proves that St. Winifred's Spring rises more than one hundred tons of water a minute."

"The Llangollen Parish Magazine," says "the spring is a subterranean stream, which some geologists say has its origin in the rocks which lie at the back of Eglwyseg, beyond the World's End, and which makes its private way by a short cut through the natural clefts of the limestone rocks to the estuary of the river, instead of mingling its holy waters with the sacred Dee in its tortuous windings around Chester. Thus the holy well is, perhaps, more closely connected with Llangollen than we might at first thoughts be inclined to allow."

James the Second, it is recorded, once touched for the King's Evil on the steps of the well; but the success which attended the exhibition of this piece of superstition is not stated.

November the fifth was formerly a day of thanksgiving all over England; but the custom long ago ceased. The only remnant of observance of the day is found in the lighting of bonfires and the firing of squibs. Roman candles, and the like.

In Yorkshire it is customary to prepare a peculiarly indigestible oatmeal gingerbread, which is termed "Parkin Cake," and which is eaten on the anniversary of this memorable day. It may be seen in the shop windows exposed for sale, previous to the fifth of November, in the shape of massive loaves, substantial cakes, or bannocks. This evidently appears to be another form of rejoicing, and the "Parkin Bread" is considered the correct thing on which to expend some of the funds collected by juveniles throughout the day by exhibiting the usual caricatures of old Guy Fawkes and some of his associates.

The Day of Saint Martin, November eleventh, was once greatly observed, but is now only associated with a quarter-day in the North of England and Scotland,

called Martinmas. The Sheriffs of England and Wales are nominated on the morrow of Saint Martin. Saint Martin was Bishop of Tours in the fourth century, and was accounted a very holy man. He died in the year 397 A.D.

On the Continent, the wines of the season were formerly first tasted on this day; the animals required to be salted for the winter's provisions were slaughtered; and the day was generally spent in conviviality. In England too, at this time, it was once customary to kill fat stock, the reason apparently being the lack of food for their consumption during the winter.

The few fine days which sometimes occur about the beginning of November have been denominated "Saint Martin's little summer." Shakespeare thus alludes to it in King Henry the Fourth, where Prince Henry says to Falstaff, "Farewell, thou latter spring! Farewell, all Hallowe Summer!"

The twentieth of November is dedicated to Saint Edmund, "King and Martyr." This was the brother and predecessor of Alfred, and he succeeded to the throne of East Anglia in 856. In 870 he was taken prisoner by the Danes, and, being a Christian, was executed. The body, shorn of its head, and pierced with arrows, was thrown into a wood, where it was afterwards found and decently buried in a wooden church at Haglisdun. The head was subsequently discovered un mutilated between the paws of a wolf, which, as Lydgate, the Monk of Bury, says, was "an unknowth thyng, and strange ageyn nature." The head, when placed in its proper position on the trunk, united so perfectly, that the separation could hardly be traced. Such a miracle could not fail to attract attention, and the body of the King-Martyr was removed to Bury, where a church was erected, and a monastery founded. Many miracles are reputed to have been worked by the dead body of this Saint, for Edmund was duly canonized by one of the Popes. The town of Bury St. Edmunds is so named, from the place being the repository of the King's remains.

November the twenty-third was greatly observed once as commemorating the life and death of Saint Clement, a fellow-worker of Saint Paul, who suffered martyrdom by being cast into the sea with an anchor fastened round his neck. In the "good old days," boys and men went round begging for drink, with which they regaled themselves at night. Saint Clement is the patron saint of blacksmiths, though

it is long since the sons of the hammer and anvil kept up the day, as the shoemakers used to do Saint Crispin.

Saint Catherine, whose day is November the twenty-fifth, is another of the saints who takes under her special care forlorn and love-stricken maidens who desire husbands, and wish to see them in the spirit before the flesh. Probably some reason for this partiality is due to the fact that the name, taken from "Katharos," signifies pure, and the saint was remarkable for the purity of her life. She died a virgin and a martyr, for which she was duly canonized by the Church of Rome. On the anniversary of her death the young women of Abbotsbury—a small town in the county of Dorset—were in the habit of repairing to the saint's well, near Saint Catherine's Chapel, Milton Abbey, where they made use of the following invocation:

A husband, Saint Catherine;
A handsome one, Saint Catherine;
A rich one, Saint Catherine;
A nice one, Saint Catherine;
And soon, Saint Catherine.

In order to dream of her sweetheart, the young lady had then only to put a piece of wedding cake under her pillow and her wish was certain to be gratified, providing the piece of wedding-cake had previously been passed through a wedding-ring. If in doubt as to which of two lovers to accept, the maiden was to get a friend to write their names on the paper in which the cake was wrapped, and then for three nights the cake and wrapper had to be placed under the young lady's pillow for her. Should she happen to dream of one of the persons, that one was certain to become her husband at no distant date.

Another charm-worker says: "On Saint Catherine's Day let any number of young women—not exceeding seven nor less than three—assemble in a room where they are safe to be free from interlopers. Just as the clock strikes eleven each must take from her bosom a sprig of myrtle, which has been worn all day; fold it up in a bit of tissue-paper; then light up a small chafing dish of charcoal, and on it each maiden must throw nine hairs from her head and a paring of each of her toe and finger nails. Each must next sprinkle a small quantity of myrtle and frankincense in the charcoal, and, while the odoriferous vapour rises, fumigate the packets of myrtle—which plant is dedicated to Venus—in it. Go to bed while the clock is striking the

hour of midnight, placing the myrtle exactly under the head; and each will be sure to dream of her future husband. One caution: the myrtle hour performance must be passed in perfect silence."

Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, and was martyred by crucifixion, A.D. 69, at Patræ, in Achaia; three hundred years later, his day was ordained a festival by Pope Urbanus. Amongst Scotchmen, his day, November thirtieth, is observed as a period for re-union all over the world. It is said that the Order of the Thistle was founded in honour of Saint Andrew, about the year 809, by Archaius the First, King of Scotland. That Monarch had made an alliance with the great Charlemagne, taking for his device, a Thistle. It is stated that King Hungus, the Pict, had a dream, in which Saint Andrew paid him a midnight visit, and promised him a sure victory over his foes, the Northumbrians. On the next day, a Saint Andrew's Cross (X) appeared in the sky, and victory followed the King's arms. It was on this event that Archaius founded the Order of the Thistle. Formerly, Saint Andrew's Cross was affixed to the doors of rooms, as a sign that those within wished to be private, and had no intercourse without. Thus, in the Duke of Buckingham's diary, there is an account of the conclave of Cardinals which met for the election of a successor to Pope Leo the Twelfth. He says: "Cardinal Gregoris, now, they say, has no chance; but his friends stick by him. Sixteen, who always vote for him, had affixed a Saint Andrew's Cross against the doors of their cells. This is meant to say that they wish for no intercourse with the rest of the conclave, had made up their minds, and desire not to be disturbed." Sir Walter Scott has a reference to the custom in "Rob Roy," where he makes Major Galbraith and the Highlanders affix a Saint Andrew's Cross to the door of the Scotch whisky-house, as a sign that they wish to remain undisturbed.

On the eve of this day, German girls, who are desirous of ascertaining what will be the colour of the hair on their future husband's head, take hold of the latch of the house door, and repeat three times, "Gentle love, if thou lovest me, show thyself;" she then opens the door quickly, and makes a rapid grasp through it into the darkness, when she finds in her hand a lock of her future husband's hair.

CHAPERONS AND DÉBUTANTES

AMONG the many rules and regulations laid down by society in England, a strict observance of which is universally recognised as obligatory, few are more arbitrarily insisted upon than the conventional impossibility of a young lady's appearing in public without a chaperon. It is regarded as a matter of course that every damsel, not only on her first entrance into the "world," but until she has passed the hymeneal Rubicon, shall be accompanied on all occasions by a female mentor of matronly experience, under whose protecting ægis she may be safely allowed to follow her own inclinations, and indulge her instinctive propensity for flirting and coquetry—if she be that way disposed—to her heart's content.

In France, where a similar usage prevails, but to a far greater extent, any such assertion of independence on the part of a "demoiselle" would be considered an unpardonable indiscretion, a gross violation of social decorum. In a ball-room, her place is by the side of her chaperon, whose watchful eye is perpetually upon her during the progress of the quadrille—"round" dances, except in very rare cases, being formally prohibited—and thither she is expected to return immediately after the final figure, without the chance of a "tête-à-tête" in the conservatory, or even an exploring promenade through the rooms.

In America, on the contrary, we are credibly informed that the system of chaperonage is dispensed with altogether, and that our fair cousins, whether located in Fifth Avenue or in remote Chicago, on the plea that they are perfectly able to take care of themselves, enjoy an entire immunity from supervision, and, by all accounts, are none the worse for it.

With us, a middle course is steered between the two extremes. The chaperonage to which our young ladies are subjected is a mere matter of form, a nominal safeguard which, while it completely satisfies the requirements of society, in no way interferes with the gratification of their personal tastes and fancies.

Their natural chaperon is of course their mother, or any other female relative who may volunteer to take charge of them; in default of these, nothing is easier than to find a convenient substitute who, for reasons of her own, is ready to undertake the office. This may be either a lady

without daughters, fond of society, and not unwilling to profit by the companionship of a young and pretty girl; or an impoverished dowager, thirsting for admittance into certain circles hitherto inaccessible to her, and grasping eagerly at the chance of utilising the attractions of her charge as a means of consolidating her own somewhat precarious position.

Moreover, there is always a possibility of the débutante's making a good match, in which case some advantage, present or prospective, is tolerably sure to fall to the share of the chaperon.

It is, we are bound to confess, slightly incongruous to find a mature spinster of thirty-five or thereabouts entering the ball-room under the protecting wing of a newly-married matron of half her age—an event more frequent than might be supposed, and perfectly conformable to the imperative exactions of the general rule. On such occasions, it is hardly necessary to add that, the formality of presentation accomplished, the ill-paired associates at once part company; the one to have her card filled up for the rest of the evening before five minutes are over, while the other, after waiting like Patience on a monument for the dancers who never arrive, gradually subsides into a "wall-flower," and is lucky if she eventually discovers some one sufficiently gallant to escort her to the supper-room.

The duties of a conscientious chaperon are multifarious, demanding infinite circumspection, and an intuitive faculty of foreseeing and counteracting any involuntary preference for ineligible admirers, which, from sheer inexperience, her protégée may be disposed to entertain. Should the latter be an heiress, the task becomes more difficult; candidates for a prize in the market being legion, and the best waltzer in the room, more frequently than not, happening to be a clerk in the Foreign Office, or a penniless subaltern. It is true that young ladies, nowadays, even in their first season, are tolerably wide awake, and know pretty well how to distinguish the wheat from the chaff; nevertheless, the cleverest are occasionally apt to slip and require to be reminded of old Lady Cork's injunction to a débutante of her day:

"As long as there are elder sons, my dear, never look at the juniors."

Nor is it enough for a chaperon to possess the necessary qualifications of a Cereberus, and to be thoroughly cognizant of all

that is going on around her. She must also be gifted, or, at any rate, profess to be so, with a constitution of iron, and late hours, night after night, must have no apparent effect upon her. Although she may be ready to drop with fatigue, like poor Major Pendennis at Lord Steyne's ball—"so tired, oh, so tired, and longing for bed"—she must be "all there," and cheerfully acquiesce in her ward's desire for "another turn," especially if the request be backed by an, in every respect, unexceptionable partner.

Débutantes, as a rule—heiresses of course excepted—are not generally popular with men, who infinitely prefer flirting with married women to the up-hill labour of testing the conversational powers of immature fledglings.

If, at the commencement of the season, some curiosity is manifested by club loungers with reference to two or three of them who are reported to be more than usually attractive, the others excite little attention; and, beyond the fact of their having figured in the list of presentations at that uncomfortable ordeal, the March Drawing-room, they are to all intents and purposes as completely ignored as if they had never left the school-room. Under these disadvantageous circumstances a girl, neither endowed with extraordinary personal charms nor brilliant expectations, is heavily handicapped at the start, and can only hope to emerge from the "ruck" by her own exertions and those of her chaperon. It would be doing the latter injustice to suppose for a moment that the coaching process has not been employed to the fullest extent for the benefit of the young lady in question, and a diligent study of that indispensable manual, "Who's Who?" rigidly insisted on.

Thus forearmed, the débutante enters society with an exact knowledge of her position and a tolerably correct one of other people's; and here the chaperon's mission ends and her own begins. She has a fair field before her and no favour, and it depends entirely on herself whether she succeed or fail.

It may, we presume, be safely asserted that a girl's principal object, after her introduction into the "world," is to secure an eligible husband; and, this being taken for granted, the question naturally arises, how can her desire be most easily and satisfactorily realised? In the whirl of London society, where everybody who is anybody is perpetually "in the swim," and absorbed

by the never-ending exigencies of the social treadmill, it is a hard matter, even for the most enterprising of her sex, to bring a man to book. However skilfully the bait may be prepared, it does not follow that the fish will do more than nibble at it; sitting out dance after dance with a pretty girl does not necessarily mean proposing, nor in this very practical age is the most ardent Lothario—unless he be hopelessly entangled—disposed to force the pace without previously reflecting, like Sir Frederick Blount in "Money," "what harm it can do him." So that, notwithstanding ingeniously managed interviews in those convenient recesses, expressly designed for such purposes in every well-regulated ball-room, it not unfrequently happens that the decisive word remains unspoken, and that another Ariadne is added to the list of inconsolables, sadly echoing the complaint of the forsaken damsel in the French vaudeville: "*C'est encore à recommencer!*"

In her second season, a young lady's pretensions are apt to undergo considerable modification; if the highest game be beyond her mark, she resigns herself to the inevitable, and casts her nets elsewhere. Except as a matter of form, she no longer needs a chaperon, her own hardly earned experience enabling her to distinguish between the men who are worth angling for, and those who are not. On the other hand, her prestige as a *débutante* is gone; in addition to her still unmarried contemporaries, she has to contend against a host of new-comers, perhaps better-looking, and certainly younger than herself; and, unless exceptionally fortunate, can scarcely fail to be worsted in the struggle.

In the latter case, her best resource is a country house, where she has fewer rivals, and a sympathising chaperon in the person of her hostess, who is invariably a match-maker at heart. Anxious to give her guest as many chances as possible, the *châtelaine* regulates her invitations accordingly, taking especial care that, as far as the female contingent is concerned, the party shall include no one likely to stand in her protégée's way. A married couple or two, and perhaps a spinster verging on maturity, but with plenty of "go" in her, with the usual make-weights in the shape of county neighbours, will amply suffice to entertain each other, leaving the young lady perfectly free to exercise her fascinations on whichever of the judiciously chosen bachelors she may elect to favour. Opportunities for quiet strolls and stolen inter-

views are never wanting, and it would be doing her injustice to suppose her capable of omitting to profit by them. If she be coquettishly inclined, she may possibly, by way of eliciting a proposal from one admirer, bestow an occasional smile of encouragement on another; a dangerous game to play, for if either of the interested parties happen to detect the manoeuvre, it is quite on the cards that she may lose both. Nevertheless, it sometimes answers to have two strings to one's bow, and we remember a case in point.

Some two or three years ago, a pretty, but dowerless damsel, whose third season in London, like the preceding ones, had been—matrimonially speaking—a failure, was invited by a lady friend to pass the month of October at her country mansion, situated in one of the most picturesque localities of the West of England. "I have asked Lord Manylands to meet you," wrote her hostess; "and, as he certainly admires you in his undemonstrative way, I do trust, my dear Evy, that something will come out of it."

Now Miss Evelyn Davenport was a very practical girl, whose favourite maxims were, "not to waste time in following a forlorn hope," and, "never to throw a chance away." Her object was to get married, and if she had not hitherto succeeded in attaining it, we may be sure that it was no fault of hers. Counting by years, she was barely one-and-twenty; but in the matter of experience and knowledge of the world, she was by no means a novice, and had very distinct ideas as to the relative merits of substance and shadow. So that, when about to join the party at Catherington Court, she was fully prepared to shape her course according to circumstances, and while naturally devoting her chief efforts to the conquest of Lord Manylands, on no account to neglect any available substitute who might fall in her way.

Before she had been established many hours in her new quarters, Miss Davenport had satisfied herself on two important points: first, that of the half-dozen girls present she was indisputably the best-looking and the most becomingly dressed; and secondly, that the only specimen of the male genus besides Lord Manylands worthy of her consideration—not taking into account a curate, a trio of "plungers" from the neighbouring county town, and a sporting baronet, intent on retrieving his dilapidated fortune by a "coup" on one

or other of the autumn handicaps—was Mr. Edward Trevor, a young man of good family and, as Lady Catherington informed her, owner of a fairly extensive property a few miles from the Court. "He might do to fall back upon," she thought, and received him graciously when he was presented to her; not at all displeased by the involuntary glance of admiration he was either unable or unwilling to repress.

Meanwhile Lord Manylands, who, until Evelyn's arrival, had shown no particular liking for the society of his fellow guests, and had mentally voted the whole thing a bore, felt considerably relieved by the prospect of an agreeable flirtation with one of his own set, and surrendered himself without scruple—for the time being—to the fascinating influence of the new-comer. He was a strange mixture of wariness and impulse, the despair of manoeuvring mothers and daughters, perpetually on the brink of a proposal, and always drawing back before the decisive word was spoken; the richest prize of the year in the matrimonial market, and the most difficult to win. This time, however, he appeared to be in earnest; his attentions to Miss Davenport were so marked that everybody, including the young lady herself, imagined they could have but one result; while Trevor, although evidently far from indifferent to the fascinating witcheries of Evelyn, shrank from openly entering the lists against so formidable a rival.

At this critical juncture the astonishment of Sir William Catherington may be conceived, when one evening, while alone with Lord Manylands in the smoking-room, the latter announced his intention, on the plea of urgent business, of starting for London by the first train on the following morning, requesting his host to make his adieux and excuses to Lady Catherington and the other ladies. As a matter of course, the news had already transpired when the party—with the exception of the hostess, who seldom appeared before the middle of the day—met at breakfast; and not a few significant glances were exchanged as the deserted fair one took her accustomed place at the table. Evelyn, however, was equal to the occasion; and her face, if a trifle paler than usual, betrayed no other sign of emotion; whereas Trevor, contrary to his wont, was in high spirits, "looking," as the sporting baronet professionally remarked to his neighbour

as a two-year-old, and fit to run for his life."

Two hours later, Miss Davenport slipped quietly into Lady Catherington's boudoir, and found her deploring the failure of her essay in match-making.

"I have no patience with the man," she said; "when it was all but a settled thing, to cry off in so shameful a manner! It's too aggravating!"

"Yes," assented Evy, in a tone as calm as if she were discussing whether it was likely to rain or not; "it is provoking, certainly, but it might have been worse."

"Worse!" exclaimed her hostess, "what could possibly be worse? I don't understand you, Evy."

"Don't you?" replied the philosophical young lady. "I thought, my dear Barbara, you knew me better than to suppose me capable of crying over spilt milk. Can't you see that his going away has simplified matters charmingly? If he had remained here, the chances are that Mr. Trevor would never have proposed to me, as he did this morning after breakfast; and, even if he had, it is just possible, you know, that I might have been silly enough to say 'No,' instead of 'Yes!'"

PLAYGROUNDS AND PUBLIC GARDENS.

It is always pleasant to notice the dedication of an open space to the use of the public; an event which, thanks in a great measure to the work of the Metropolitan Playground Association, is now frequent enough. However small the space may be, it still is of service. The halting footsteps of those who roam through this wilderness of bricks and mortar, seeking work perhaps and finding none, turn naturally to such a haven; children find it out and make a playground of it; tired women with their burdens rest for awhile; perhaps some perplexed and wearied creature finds solace in the calm and quiet of the old graveyard, and gathers strength to endure for a little longer "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." Even for the wandering country cousin, or for one who explores the town in historical and topographical intents, the respite afforded by the little garden in the heart of the city from the bewildering turmoil all around is a thing to be grateful for; while it affords a secure point of departure for further researches. Nor is it without benefit that the forlorn and orna-

some aspect of many of the old deserted resting-places of the dead should be replaced by a pleasant, decent show of grass and shrubs and flowers.

Sometimes indeed the public acquisition is on a more extended scale, as witness the grounds now called St. James's Gardens, situated in a densely populated neighbourhood, with an entrance from the Hampstead Road, not far from where it merges into the Tottenham Court Road, and in the very busiest part of it, where trams and omnibuses are thickest, and where the throng of people marketing and shopping from the crowded regions of Saint Pancras are mingled with the denizens of the more aristocratic quarters of Regent's Park, Camden and Kentish Towns, and Hampstead. A dingy-looking church of red brick faces the street; on either side is the Temperance Hospital; a tall cluster of model dwellings rises a little further on; and these are landmarks sufficient to guide the explorer to the newly-opened Saint James's Gardens.

The old burial-ground, which not long ago in its forlorn and neglected state was pitiful to behold, is now a pleasant resort, with wide dry asphalt paths, shrubs and little thickets here and there, seats and benches, green lawns and gay parterres; gay especially with the brightest of autumn flowers, marigolds and asters, dahlias, chrysanthemums, and all the sunny blossoms which the skill of modern gardeners has brought forth to cheer the declining days of autumn. Nor are the dead who sleep beneath the grassy turf and gay flower-beds altogether forgotten; here and there a monument remains, whose dignity and size has preserved it from the general clearance; and along the boundary wall are ranged the headstones, many of them almost illegible, which were once thickly planted over the whole area. On either hand the backs of thickly populated streets, of the bare and sombre character of the period, hedge in this pleasant enclosure; and beyond, with somewhat the aspect of a huge mausoleum, rise the buildings which form the Euston Station.

It was this monstrous Euston dépôt that threatened to devour the whole of the space now devoted to the public; and, but for the vigilance of the friends of public gardens and playgrounds, this precious piece of ground would have been, ere this, occupied by trucks, and sidings, ticket offices, or official bureaux. Now there is the pleasant rattle of hoops up and down the

asphalte walks; troops of children file in when the school hours permit, and make the place resound with their cheerful voices; old men sun themselves upon the benches; women bring their work and sit, and hem, and sew.

It is not the rude forefathers of the hamlet who sleep in this graveyard now redeemed from dank neglect and disorder. Saint Pancras knew them not; they came from the aristocratic purlieus of Saint James's, Westminster: solid, wealthy tradesmen, divines, soldiers, peers and peeresses, artists, actors, musicians, whose dust now mingles with the roots of trees and flowers.

A hundred years ago the place was a brick-field, stripped of the clay which had gone to build many of the solid, dingy houses about Soho. London was then a good way from Saint Pancras, although steadily creeping on that way; and the Rector and Churchwardens of old Saint James's thought, no doubt, that they had secured a country burial-ground that might last for as many long years as the old churchyard, when they purchased the brick-field from my Lord Southampton.

The red-brick church, now enclosed in a loving embrace by the Temperance Hospital, was built as chapel of ease and mortuary chapel, and consecrated in 1793. In the same year the graveyard received among its earliest tenants the body of Lord George Gordon, the hero of the "No Popery" riots of thirteen years before. Before his death, Lord George had adopted the Jewish faith, and a good deal of the Jewish appearance; and with his long beard, his hooked nose, and low-crowned hat, might have served as a model for the Fagin of the future. Lord George, it will be remembered, died in the Newgate prison, where he had been confined for libelling the Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, whose terrible misfortunes had raised the chivalric feelings even of lawyers and statesmen. And Gordon was carried off by the "maladie du pays," the terrible gaol fever. But whether Jew or Christian, convict or martyr, the man was still of the noble house of Gordon, and was buried decently in consecrated ground, although no monument to his memory has been discovered.

Among artists interred in this burial-ground of Saint James's, is George Morland, one of the most besotted of geniuses, who brought pigs, and cart-horses, and the denizens of stable-yards and cow-

houses into distinction, while sinking himself below the level of the animals he painted with such truth and vigour. Morland's obsequies were celebrated in 1804; and Wilkie Collins relates, that his father, William Collins, joined the funeral train. Then, there is a monument to a certain Charles Ross, R.A., who died in 1839, who might have been well known in his day, but who has left little impression upon ours. At least, one distinguished musician, too, is buried here—George Smart, the composer of many excellent old-fashioned songs and glees. A giant, too, was of the company, whose grave was long shown as a curiosity to the frequenters of the cemetery, but whose record has somehow slipped into oblivion. Then there are famous old brick vaults beneath the surface of the ground, where sleep some of the most respectable of the trading community of Saint James's—warm bankers now cold enough; lords of vats and drays; with others of more courtly connection, such as the Fitzroys, Barons Southampton, the Earl of Rosse, whose smoke-corroded monument still remains to testify to his worth and celebrity otherwise in danger of oblivion. Here, too, lie soldiers who fought in the war of American Independence; others who were the heroes of combats, the names of which are almost forgotten; an Admiral or two, with valiant sea Captains; and even the little midshipmite has here found a place.

Among the other notable characters who hereabouts found a resting-place, the Chevalier d'Eon deserves mention, the real history of whose extraordinary life has perhaps never been fully revealed. Whether he were man or woman, noble or "roturier," diplomatic agent or spy, man of honour or adventurer, has never been definitely settled; but the Chevalier lived to be old and poor; the Revolution had deprived him of his possessions—as doubtful as the rest of his belongings; and he, or she, survived even into the present century, a teacher of fencing, a giver of entertainments, and a pensioner on the bounty of former friends.

But what shall we say of the undistinguished dead who here found a resting-place—with no monuments to record their names and lineage, or only the plain headstone with a half-obliterated name or date. Here is one who came from Long Melford, which seems to give him or her a certain distinction—connecting the name with the patter of the gipsy in Lavengro. And

yet every one of these has lived and, perhaps, loved, has rejoiced and suffered—tears have been shed over their graves; while the mourners themselves have been mourned for in their turn; and the pangs of bereavement, and the woe of separation, have been handed down, perhaps the only heritage, from one generation to another.

All that there is of gloom, however, and despondency attaching to a graveyard, seems to have passed away in the continuous stream of life which now passes about it. The autumn sunshine brightens up the gay flower-beds; children shout and scamper about; and old men smoke the pipe of peace in calm contemplation. The roar of London sounds strangely afar off, although in reality so near; while trains running in and out from the great terminus, give a gentle tremor to the earth that contains the dust of a century's harvest of the dead—a place of rest for them and for us too, who still live on.

THE FUTURE OF NEW GUINEA.

SINCE we gave in these columns, some three or four years ago, a summary of what was then known of New Guinea,* the island has come to occupy a prominent position in international, as well as in imperial, politics. Its name, as well as its destiny, has undergone change, for we no longer hear it spoken of as Papua. It is New Guinea, as far as we and the Australians are concerned; but the Germans have rechristened their portion of the island Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, and the chain of islands to the east, Bismarck Archipelago. This archipelago includes New Ireland (re-named New Mecklenburg), and New Britain (re-named New Pommern), islands which the Australians think should certainly have been annexed to the British Empire. The names would naturally lead to such a supposition; but on the other hand, as far as these addenda to the more important island of New Guinea are concerned, there is not much known about them to render them attractive or desirable possessions.

Without going back upon the old story of Australian fears, Queensland pretensions, and German competition, the position to-day is that New Guinea has been appropriated by, and amicably divided among, three European nations. The Dutch, who had a

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. xxxi. p. 534. "New Guinea."

sort of prescriptive right to the northern end, although they have not now, we believe, a single settlement upon it, have been granted a boundary line coincident with the one hundred and forty-first degree of east longitude; all to the eastward of that line being divided between Germany and Great Britain.

Dutch New Guinea is believed to be the finest portion of the island, although it has been as yet even less explored than the other portions. It is curiously indented, or intersected by Geelvink Bay on the north, and McClure Inlet on the west, which form a double peninsula. These inlets afford several good harbours; and there are some considerable rivers, the Amberno, in particular, being of great size.

In the interior there is a range of mountains, some points of which reach a height of ten thousand feet, and are the only instances in tropical Asia where perpetual snow is found. It is on the slopes of these mountains that the Dutch hope some day to see plantations which will rival those of some of the rich islands of the Indian Archipelago; but as yet the plantations are only among the things which may be.

At present there is not a single trading settlement in the Dutch possession, for a station, which was established some sixty years ago, at Triton Bay, was broken up after a few years on account of the unhealthiness of the climate at that place. There is still, we believe, a mission station at Dorey, or Dorei, in Geelvink Bay, a place which may be remembered in connection with Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace's explorations; but, with this exception, there is not, as far as we know, a single Dutch establishment in the large territory now known as Dutch New Guinea, and comprising one hundred and twelve thousand three hundred and fifty square miles.

German New Guinea, or Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, has for western boundary the one hundred and forty-first meridian of longitude already mentioned, from which a line drawn at the fifth parallel of south latitude and continued obliquely to Huon Gulf on the north-east shore marks the division. Including Admiralty Island, New Britain, New Ireland, and the other islands of the Bismarck Archipelago, German New Guinea comprises some seventy-eight thousand square miles. Not much is known of the territory; but it will not be like the Germans to leave it long unexplored. In fact since they have taken possession, they have sent out several expeditions, and have

given special privileges to a large trading company. The coast also has been carefully surveyed, and reports of the surveys have from time to time appeared in the Imperial White Books published at Berlin. Several useful harbours are said to have been discovered in Huon Gulf, and also the mouths of several considerable rivers. The Germans seem to have formed a low estimate of the character and qualities of the aborigines, and they have not as yet penetrated much into the interior.

Of British New Guinea rather more is known, and it is this portion of the Dark Island which is most attractive to us. In area it comprises some eighty-six thousand eight hundred square miles. It includes the D'Entrecasteaux Islands to the north, and the Louisiade Islands to the east and south of the extremity of the south-western peninsula of New Guinea. Some of these islands are thickly populated, and the inhabitants have the reputation of being cannibals. For what is known about British New Guinea, beyond what we indicated in our former article, the world is chiefly indebted to the Revs. W. G. Lawes and James Chalmers, missionaries; to Mr. H. O. Forbes, who had charge of an expedition promoted by the Royal and Scottish Geographical Societies to Mount Owen Stanley; and to Sir Peter Scratchley.

When the German occupation took place, the claims of England only extended to a Protectorate. But at the recent meeting of the Colonial Conference in London, it was arranged that the Queen's Sovereignty should now be proclaimed over the protected territory; that the Governor should be appointed by, and be responsible to, the Imperial Government, but, under the guidance and instruction of the Governor of Queensland; and that the several Australian Colonies should among them contribute fifteen thousand pounds per annum towards the expenses of the new administration, the rest to be borne by the Mother Country. The arrangement seems a fair one, for except to guard the Colonies and to afford them a possible outlet for their surplus energies, there would be little inducement for Britain to trouble herself with so distant and doubtful a possession.

It was in April, 1883, that Mr. Chester, the Magistrate or Governor of Thursday Island under the Queensland Government, hoisted the British flag at Port Moresby, and assumed possession of all that part of New Guinea, with the adjacent islands, between the one hundred and forty-first

and one hundred and fifty-fifth meridians of east longitude. That Act was annulled by the British Government; but, when in the following year, it was announced that the Germans had taken possession of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, General Scratchley was appointed Special Commissioner to go and assume jurisdiction "over the southern shore of New Guinea, and the country adjacent thereto, from the one hundred and forty-first meridian of east longitude, eastward as far as East Cape, including the islands adjacent thereto and in Goshen Straits, and southward of these Straits as far south and east as to include Kosman Islands." The line of demarcation was afterwards arranged with Germany.

General Scratchley arrived in Melbourne in the beginning of 1885, but it was not until the following August that his arrangements with the Colonies were so completed as to enable him to sail for the new territory. On the 13th of that month, he left Sydney with his staff on board the "General Blackall," a steamer chartered for the purpose from the Australasian Steam Navigation Company. Calling at Brisbane, Sir Peter picked up Mr. H. O. Forbes, who had lost most of his outfit at Batavia, and was waiting in Queensland for a chance of getting across to New Guinea, which was duly reached on the 28th of August, 1885. In the following December, Sir Peter died at sea, from the effects of "New Guinea fever," and a valuable and faithful officer was thus lost to the British Crown. What he did, and what conclusions he came to during his mission, we are now enabled to gather from his papers and journals, which have been compiled by Mr. C. Kinloch Cooke, and recently published in a volume by Messrs. Macmillan and Co.

We find that Sir Peter Scratchley, with untiring energy, personally visited eighteen districts, twenty-seven islands, thirty-four inland and sixty coast villages, in the new territory, so that, short as was his term of office, he saw more of British New Guinea than any single individual before him had done. First of all he fixed upon Port Moresby as the seat of Government, and purchased a considerable area of land from the natives. This area comprised the best sites in the harbour, and nearly the whole of the sea-frontage. Upon a portion of it a site was marked for Government buildings, another for a town-ship, and the rest was held as a native reserve.

A chief called Boevagi was formally recognised as head of the district, and was instructed to refer all matters of dispute and trouble to Sir Peter, as High Commissioner, who further entertained some score or so of other chiefs, and taught them to look upon white men as their friends. Then he had to arrange a scale of Port and Customs dues, a system of registration of coasting vessels, the establishment of mail service, a supply of fresh water to ships, and other matters of practical business. There were also higher questions to consider and arrange, such as the sources and nature of revenue; the rivalries between the Protestant and Roman Catholic missions; the various unsettled land claims; the appointment of subordinate officials; while the alleged murders of white men by natives had to be enquired into.

In September we find him writing in the diary which was kept mainly for his wife's information:

"I see my way clearly about this whole New Guinea affair. It will not be unpleasant, and I find that I came here at a very good time. The S.E. trade wind is certainly a blessing. I begin to think I shall be able to stand it for two years, but not for longer. There are more chances of getting letters over than I expected. In time I shall have my own schooner, and establish regular communication."

A fortnight later he again writes:

"I am making a good start in New Guinea, but must devote next year to it. I do not now fear the climate. As for the blacks, they are easily met by firmness, justice, and caution. I am more than ever convinced that all the outrages are justifiable. I have heard horrible stories about the doings of the whites, and, please God, I shall let the light of day into them. A righteous cause I am engaged in, and that gives me zest in working it."

As to the outrages, one example may be cited. On the fifth of October, 1885, a Captain Miller landed on a small island off Normanby Island, having with him some four men, with the object of erecting a "smoke-house" and fishing for *bêche-de-mer*.* The natives appeared to be friendly, and collected stones for him; but suddenly two approached him from behind and killed him—one braining him with a tomahawk, the other cutting his throat.

Sir Peter Scratchley at once instituted

* A sea-slug exported to China, where it is highly esteemed as an edible.

an investigation on the spot, but could discover no motive for the murder, as Miller had never been to the island before. The affair thus appeared to be one of sheer bloodthirstiness, until afterwards, at Port Moresby, it came out that relatives of the two murderers had been carried away in a labour-vessel some years before, and had not been returned. These two men, therefore, determined to kill the first white man who came to the island, and having done so, offered what they believed to be fair value for the life they had taken—a few shells, a native basket, and some tobacco! Sir Peter Scratchley explained this offer as due to the low value placed on life among the natives, and to their recognised custom of receiving payment as compensation for murder. He wrote:

"I am satisfied that these white traders are often reckless, unscrupulous, brutal, and piratical. They cheat the natives, and are apt to appeal to their revolvers. I cannot feel any sympathy for such men. They go where they have no business to; they are a thorn in my side, and I do not think the life of any white man should be risked in avenging their deaths."

He was determined also to prevent the indiscriminate influx of speculators and adventurers, and so proclaimed that no person should be allowed to land in New Guinea without a permit. The officials at Queensland ports were also directed by the Colonial Government to prevent any vessel, without a permit, from clearing for New Guinea. And, with regard to explorers, Sir Peter rejected every application for a permit to explore where he was of opinion that the attempt could only result in ruin to the applicant, or might cause a breach in the relations with the natives. He favoured the opening up of the country by large companies, on a basis like that of the British North Borneo Company, and he granted special permits to a few private companies under certain conditions, which kept the parties well within the control of the Executive.

The disputes with reference to various claims for land put in by Europeans who had gone through some unintelligible form of purchase from natives necessitated the enactment of very rigorous rules to prevent further abuses. The ownership of land in New Guinea was very obscure, and it appeared to be divided among groups of individuals who might or might not be related by kin. Sir Peter Scratchley's idea was to establish recognised tribal chiefs through

whom a title should accrue; but in any case he determined that, to ensure fair play and prevent further disputes, no purchase of land from natives should be allowed or confirmed without the intervention of the Government.

Sir Peter Scratchley, indeed, found the natives of New Guinea without either social or political organisation, and he sought to give them both. Although superior in physique to the Australian blacks, they have no such defined tribal system as the Fijians and the Maoris; and, moreover, the difficulty of dealing with them is enhanced by the great variety of dialects among them. Every village appears to have its own dialect, and thus commercial transactions are necessarily restricted by the difficulties of language. But the people do a considerable inland trade among themselves—the tribes from the interior bringing food products to exchange with the coast tribes for fish, salt, and so on. The agricultural work is all done by the women, the men as a rule being indisposed to, and perhaps incapable of, systematic labour. For food they rely upon bananas, yams, sweet potatoes, taro, cocoa-nuts, sugar-cane, bread-fruit, and other native fruits, and fish.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that the Papuans are altogether devoid of enterprise. Near Port Moresby they make a kind of pottery.

The future of New Guinea largely depends on the native question. As Sir Peter Scratchley says in his notes: "The only hope of making New Guinea pay is by the employment of natives, who can, by patience and care, be trained. If they disappear, others will have to be imported. Putting, therefore, the protection of the natives on the lowest ground, it will be seen that it will be cheaper to preserve and educate them. New Guinea must be governed for the natives and by the natives." In this respect, the duty of a humane Government and the interests of capitalists coincide; for if the natives are corrupted or made hostile, the island will become the happy hunting-ground of unscrupulous adventurers; while if they learn to repose confidence in their rulers, settlement will be possible; European capital may with advantage be introduced; and New Guinea will become the permanent and regular source of supply of tropical products to the Australian markets.

This, then, is why Sir Peter devoted himself so persistently to win the goodwill

of the natives and to establish some sort of political organisation among them. He found, in several instances, two or three rival chiefs in a single village; and he endeavoured to render the people more capable of self-government by appointing a tribal chief in each district, who should not only be trustee for the lands and responsible for the conduct of the inhabitants of his district, but should also be vested with some Government authority. The scheme which he proposed, and which it is to be hoped his successor will complete, was "a modified form of the Java system, making the Government-elected chief the recipient of a fixed annual payment, and responsible for the safety of foreigners, as well as for the maintenance of law and order within his district."

Then, by means of the official chiefs and native teachers, he proposed to introduce the cultivation of rice and maize, so as to give the people an inducement to labour and to systematic cultivation.

The labours of the London Missionary Society have certainly prepared the way for such a scheme as that we have indicated. They have some forty stations where native teachers are employed, and at their head-quarters they instruct native students in the industrial arts. At Murray Island, for instance, students have built a schooner for mission purposes, under the direction of an English boat-builder. The efforts of the missionaries and their native assistants have opened up communication along most of the coast-line of our new territory, and also far into the interior, so much so that confidence in white men is beginning to be established, and a European can now go alone and unarmed for fifty miles inland from any point between Port Moresby and Hula in perfect safety. That is a stretch of about one hundred miles along the sea-board, which does not seem much in the vast area of our new possession; but it is something gained, and is more than can be said of any section of Dutch or German New Guinea. The Roman Catholic missionaries have been endeavouring to establish themselves in places where the London Missionary Societies have been for years; and Sir Peter Scratchley regarded these efforts as extremely unwise from a political point of view, since confusion of creeds is productive of disturbance among primitive races. He persuaded some of the Catholics to leave, and to turn their attention to districts where there are no other missionaries.

One reason, of course, for assimilating and employing the natives is the climate, which is unsuitable for Europeans. It is hoped, however, that, as the country becomes settled and the soil broken up and cultivated, the pestilential qualities will be modified and, perhaps, in time disappear. Contrary to former belief, it is found that fever prevails also in the interior, although of a less severe type than that of the coast; but on the highlands the atmosphere is at times invigorating.

With the exception of the district named Port Moresby, the whole of British New Guinea is well watered, and, besides the Fly River, which D'Albertis explored, there are several other important rivers. A range of mountains, running north and south, forms a sort of backbone to our territory, the highest point being Mount Owen Stanley, some thirteen thousand feet high, which Mr. H. O. Forbes is bent on exploring. There is a great deal of tropical forest along the slopes of this range and its spurs, and the valleys are full of deep, rich soil. In many parts of both highland and lowland the natives have cleared, fenced, and cultivated large tracts. Near the coast the vegetation is Australian in character; further inland it is more tropical.

As regards minerals, Mr. H. O. Forbes, who has made many careful geological observations, is of opinion that gold will not be found to the westward, but may be found in the high country above Milne Bay, at the extremity of the peninsula; for the pebbles and fragments brought from thence indicate a similar formation to that of the New South Wales gold-fields. Plumbago is reported to have been found at several places along the south-east coast; but the mineral wealth generally of the island is as yet only conjectural.

The forest wealth, however, is considerable, and, for some time, cedar has been cut for the Australian markets. There has been a good deal of waste in the operations, and a Government forester has now been appointed to prevent the felling of all trees under a fixed girth. Some two or three firms are now also employed in the cutting and export of india-rubber, massoi (the bark of which has a medicinal value), sandalwood, ebony, and hardwood, all of which are abundant.

Along the shores and islands the bêche-de-mer fishery is prosecuted, but not apparently with so much success as in the South Sea Islands. The Papuans, in some

districts, seem to have a superstitious dislike to handle the *bêche-de-mer*. Nevertheless, the exports of this article from British New Guinea are estimated to be worth about eight thousand pounds per annum.

Another important export, which may be further developed, is that of coprah. This is the kernel of the cocoa-nuts, which are split and dried in the sun, and is used for making cocoa-nut oil, oil-cake for cattle food, and so on. In certain parts of New Guinea the cocoa-nut tree is very abundant, and, as it bears fruit in three years after planting, there is plenty of room for developement. On some parts of the coast the climate is too damp for sun-drying; but it is proposed to bring the nuts to Port Moresby, and dry them there.

At the western extremity of the territory, pearl fishing is actively prosecuted, and is sometimes very prolific. Lately, some attempts in the *Louisiade Archipelago* have been very successful.

Indigenous products are, besides those mentioned, nutmegs, ginger, pepper, spices, sago, hemp, cocoa-nut fibre, saffron, canes, and rattans. The climate and soil are also reported to be suitable for the cultivation of cinchona, coffee, rice, sugar, arrowroot, cotton, vanilla, and tobacco; not of course indiscriminately, but in selected districts. All these are products which the natives could be easily taught to cultivate. For pastoral pursuits the country is not suited, although there are portions of the interior where sheep and goats might be grazed sufficient for local requirements. When a sheep was first landed for the use of the mission-house at Port Moresby, the natives had never seen one before. But they have plenty of pigs, of the flesh of which they are extremely fond. The next greatest native luxury is tobacco, which everyone smokes—men, women, and children. Tobacco is the sort of current coin at Port Moresby, for it is used to pay for almost everything in a small way, and without it the missionaries could not obtain either vegetables or water. Thus it is calculated that tobacco will become a very important article of trade in New Guinea. Naturally, other imports will be cloth (when the people learn to dress), hardware, ironwork, and such things.

Pottery of a kind is, as we have already said, made on the island, and entirely by women. They use no machinery and no potter's wheel, but they have acquired great dexterity in judging the sizes and

fashioning the shapes. They break up red and grey clay into powder, mix it with fine silver sand and water, and knead it into a large lump, from which with the hand, aided by a shell and a flat stone, they first make the top and lip of the pot, taking an old pot as mould for the body. They scrape and smooth the exterior with stone and shell; dry the pots in the sun, and then bake them in a fire. When red-hot, the pots are taken out and sprinkled with tannin of a blackish colour, extracted from mangrove bark; after which they receive a second and final heating. They are then ready for exportation, and that exportation is considerable. A trading party filling twenty large canoes, will sometimes start for the west. These canoes will carry about thirty men each, and each man will have about fifty pots made by his family. These six hundred men will thus have a total cargo of some thirty thousand pots at one voyage, which may extend for two or three hundred miles, and from which they will return with perhaps one hundred and fifty tons of sago obtained in exchange for their pottery.

Mr. G. R. Askwith, who was Sir Peter Scratchley's secretary, has furnished some interesting notes about New Guinea, confirming the favourable impression which Sir Peter's diary gives with regard to the natives. The success of the Protestant Mission at Port Moresby has been very encouraging, and Mr. Chalmers's name has become one of power and peace. Peace indeed is said to be the great result of the mission-teaching in New Guinea. The native religion is without definite form, and seems to consist more in a fear of an unseen Evil Power than of anything else. The spirits of the mountain are held in dread, and all kinds of small things, such as fire-flies, are supposed to be spirits of evil.

"There is no comfort or brightness in the native religion," says Mr. Askwith. "A dim Supreme Being called Aobada, whose province it is hard to determine, appears to hold the chief place, and then a succession of dreaded evil spirits, including the ghosts of the dead, follow in dismal order. All is darkness and fear."

Mr. Lawes has established a school at Port Moresby, where "the three R's" are taught in Motu, and where English is also taught. Mr. Lawes has translated the four Gospels and several hymns into Motu; and Mr. Askwith says that he saw at the school copper-plate writing which could hardly be surpassed in an English national school.

The following is Mr. Askwith's description of New Guinea dwellings:

"The houses on this part of the coast, as also in the villages inland, are built upon piles, varying from four to eight feet in height. A few steps up a rude ladder lead to a platform, on which some of the family generally recline. A baby, and often a young pig, in nets suspended from the eaves, are gently swinging to and fro. Fishing-nets lie in a corner, with shells attached for weights. Nautilus shells, with grass streamers or hideous carved pieces of wood, hang before the bamboo door, which is low and narrow, and leads into the common room, where all the family sleep. The common room is about twelve feet by eighteen feet, with a bare flooring of rough planks, generally the sides of old canoes. Through the chinks the garbage is thrown upon the plentiful remnants of cocoa-huaks below, for the pigs to eat or the sea to carry away. In the middle of the room is a fire-place, a pile of ashes on some boards, with a spark protector of bamboo stick hung about three feet above. On the central pole is hung a tom-tom, while here and there on the grass walls are suspended gourds for lime, bamboo pipes, tomahawks, adzes, spare grass petticoats, and net-bags. There is no window, but a moveable shutter can generally be opened on the sea-side, and plenty of air enters through the walls and the holes in the floor."

Then as to clothing: "The natives certainly affect sincere simplicity in the matter of dress. The only article common to all the men is a thin string, a third of an inch in breadth, passed tightly round the waist and between the legs. A band of grass, which serves as a pocket for tobacco, knives, and decorations of cotton leaves, is for the most part worn upon the upper part of the arm. Some have head bands of red braid or small rounded pieces of shells, while a few wear necklaces of shells or teeth, and carved bones through the nose. Their hair, thick, matted, and long, is drawn up by a comb of bamboo cane. The women wear petticoats of woven grass, sometimes stained with a red hue. The married and betrothed have short hair; the majority are tattooed with a V-shaped mark and other designs upon the breast. Their figures are squat and not so erect as those of Hindoo women, as they generally carry weights on the back and not on the head."

For the proper administration of New Guinea, a considerable increase will be

needed to the machinery of Government which Sir Peter Scratchley had at command; but the arrangement which has been concluded between England and the Australians has doubtless provided for all that. It may be some time before the new territory is self-supporting; but the result of Sir Peter Scratchley's observations is to leave the impression that it may be made supporting. Various sources of public self-revenue have been indicated, which, however, we need not enter upon here.

New Guinea has been annexed mainly for political purposes. The interesting point now is whether it is likely to be of commercial value in the future. From what has been said, it will be seen that there are good reasons for believing that the commercial potentiality is by no means unimportant, although the exaggerated expectations which have been entertained in Australia may not be realised. A wise and considerate policy towards the native races; the careful prosecution of the educational and religious aims of the missions; a rigorous exclusion of "fire-water" and unscrupulous speculators; a judicious fostering of native industries, and the gradual addition of others adapted to the land and the people; will combine to make New Guinea, if not an immediate object for large employment of British capital, at any rate a possession of considerable actual value and much promise. If gold is discovered in paying quantities, of course the prospect will widen considerably.

"CLOSER THAN A BROTHER."

By G. B. STUART.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER X.—AFTER THE WEDDING.

THE November sun was shining brightly on the Bulteel woods, touching with yellow light the bare boughs of the chestnuts and the still russet masses of the elms and oaks; Squire Bulteel had been dead a few weeks over a year; and his widow had that day bestowed her plump hand upon the Rev. Charles Haddington, Vicar of the Parish. There had been a mixture of the pathetic and the ludicrous in the whole affair, which had amused and touched John and May Bulteel; they were not particularly fond of their stepmother; but Mrs. Bulteel's tearful parting from her old home, interrupted as it was by sharp in-

junctions to her new lord and her French lady's maid, had softened the hearts of the lookers-on; she had kissed John and clung to him a little as they parted in the hall. "Thank you, John, a thousand times for all you have been to a lonely woman," she said, and failed to notice that this awkward farewell disarranged her lilac bonnet-strings.

May and she had always been more like ill-assorted sisters than like mother and daughter, the girl's earnestness of character and the shallow little widow's affected youthfulness bringing them to a comparative equality; but in the excitement of the Vicar's wooing they had got nearer to each other than ever before. Mrs. Buldeel had been stirred a little below her usually placid surface, and her stepdaughter had, for the first time in her life, come face to face with a real love affair. The Rev. Charles had not proved a very impassioned lover; but his handsome portly exterior had really fascinated his bride, who was thoroughly tired by this time of her widow's "rôle;" she had never professed more than profound esteem for the late Squire, and she was genuinely, if somewhat foolishly, in love with her new husband. She had cried more over her second wedding than she had even done at the Squire's funeral—tears of excitement and emotion during the service, tears of real feeling as she said good-bye to her stepchildren, who had been very tender and considerate of her during her engagement. John and May Buldeel put their natural dislike of a scene from them as well as they were able, and parted from their stepmother with as much effusion as they could muster, though when their eyes met after the last embrace there was a suspicion of laughter lurking not far away.

"Poor little soul!" muttered John, as the dark green brougham from the Vicarage carried its new mistress away, "I hope, with all my heart, she will be happy!"

Arthur Twisden, who had come down on certain legal business connected with the happy event, was aiming the last satin shoe at the retreating carriage; the Arch-deacon and his wife, friends of the bridegroom, had retired before the draught of the front door to gather their wraps together in the inner hall; John and his sister stood at the top of the steps alone, and she slipped her arm familiarly into his.

"She is sure to be happy; she is really in love with him."

"Pompous old ass!"

"Well, he is rather; but she doesn't see it."

"Do you think anything would make you so utterly blind to a fellow's defects, May?"

Before the girl could answer, Arthur Twisden came running back:

"I've landed that one right on the Vicar's lap, and, do you know, he was just wiping her tears with his own silk pocket-handkerchief!"

John laughed; but May turned into the house without paying Mr. Twisden much attention. Her brother's question had taken her by surprise, and, though the words were commonplace enough, the tone in which it was spoken had been curiously anxious. Was it possible that he had a hidden passion for some one, of whom, in his humility, he thought himself unworthy? She was certain that it was no one about Buldeel, for even county gossip, which subsists for an indefinite time on nothing at all, had failed to find sufficient nourishment to keep itself alive in the movements of Mr. Buldeel. He spent his time almost entirely on his own estate, and knew none of the neighbouring families intimately enough to have his name even casually coupled with any of their daughters. But in those fifteen years, of which May knew so little, there must have been somebody, in spite of John's assurances that he had never known a lady till he came back to Buldeel, who had taught his eyes to grow wistful and tender and had given that touch of anxious uncertainty to his voice. May was astonished to remember how often she had observed these symptoms lately. Like other healthy-minded and rather supercilious young people, she had been wont to hold the outward signs of falling in love rather in contempt; but Mrs. Buldeel's elderly love affair, though she laughed at it a little, had filled her with interest, and had started her mind on a similar track with respect to John. Why did his face grow troubled, and his voice falter, as she had often noticed it did, when some chance allusion caused him to speak of Wambo and his partner there? It was not in Nature—in man's nature, at least, May decided from the depths of her wide experience—to grieve thus for a man who had been merely a business partner! There was certainly a woman in the case, and perhaps John was hungering to speak of her; the notion came to May, in a flash, as she

stood making conventional farewells to the Archdeacon's lady, and she could hardly wait patiently till the carriage which carried these guests and Arthur Twisden back to Barkham had driven off, to begin questioning her brother with a view of satisfying her suspicions.

"There, there's an end of it," she said. "Come out on the terrace, John, and let us walk up and down as fast as we can. I want to get some fresh air, and shake off this haunting smell of orange-flowers and white kid gloves!"

"In that dress?" May had put aside her mourning for the occasion, and wore a costume of white serge, trimmed with dark fur; her brother's eyes travelled over it seriously.

"Why not? I can change later; just now I want to go out before it gets too chilly. What is wrong with my dress? Don't you like it?"

"I—I—yes——"

"I thought you would like it," she interrupted in a vexed voice; "perhaps you think I should not have left off my mourning altogether; but I shall put on my black dress again to-morrow, and I wanted to please Mrs. Bulteel. She would have thought it a dreadful omen if there had been any black at her wedding: but I am sorry you don't like it."

"Like isn't the word," John said slowly. "I think, in that dress, you are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen!" And so saying, he turned abruptly and walked towards the door opening on to the terrace.

"I am so glad! Don't think you are going to escape me after that pretty speech; I am coming with you round the garden, if only to celebrate the occasion of your first fraternal compliment!" To herself she thought, "then she can't be at all good-looking, or he would never have said that to me; John never says what he does not strictly mean!"

"John," as they paced up and down the terrace in the falling autumn light, "do you really mean that you never met any ladies all the time you were in Queensland? Did you have no opportunity of exercising that flattering tongue of yours, in all those years that you were away from England?"

"None at all; if you mean on the fair sex."

"Are there no ladies in Queensland?"

"We had none up on Wambo; I don't think there were any that would have

come under your description at Roper; of course, there are ladies in Brisbane and Rockhampton as there are in England, but I didn't happen to know any."

"Hadn't your partner—the man Bell who was murdered—any sister?"

"Good Heavens, May, what do you mean?"

"Just what I say! What are you so excited about? Now I know he had a sister, and you were in love with her, weren't you?"

John Bulteel shook himself roughly from his sister's hand; "I must beg you not to talk about poor Bell—it is painful to me; I don't think I can make you understand what he was to me."

"I don't want to talk of him," May said perversely; she was tired, and very nearly cross, a state of things which had not been between her and her brother for some months now, for after the episode of the fire she had given him her allegiance most completely. "I only asked you if he had a sister, and, instead of answering me, you flew into a rage!"

"I am very sorry."

"Had he a sister?"

"I don't know. I daresay. I believe he had."

"Out there?"

"Oh, no, certainly not; at home."

"And you have never seen her?"

"How could I?"

"Why, John!"—May stopped in her walk and stood staring at him, her grey eyes looking like two clear lamps, so wide and bright shone their quick indignation—"you have been at home nearly a year, and you have never tried to find that poor girl out to tell her anything about the man whom you say was closer to you than a brother! Do you think if you had been murdered that your friend John Bell would have treated me so? Think of the heart-ache, and the uncertainty, and the longing for some details; some last words, perhaps, or at least an idea of the place where he died, and the faces that were about him at the last. Is it possible you can look at your own sister, and leave her to suffer all this? You must go off to-morrow, to London, or wherever she is, and see her and tell her everything. Why, you had better bring her here and let us do what we can to comfort her. Did you write and tell her of her brother's death, or how was the news broken to her?"

"She was officially informed, I believe," John answered. He looked dazed and

puzzled, as well he might, for May's attack had been as sudden and unexpected as it was vehement.

"And you never attempted to soften the shock in any way? For shame, John, I could not have believed you would have had so little feeling for your friend's sister. Why I, who hardly know the man's name, can scarcely bear to think of him lying murdered in an unknown grave, unthought of, unremembered."

"For Heaven's sake be quiet!"

"Ah, you may well say that!" May had lashed herself into a perfect fury of scorn. All the excitement of the day had to find vent somehow; and John seemed, for once, curiously unable to answer her. "But I think you have a monopoly of 'quietness' in such a case as this, and I am sure you are welcome to it! Unless you promise to start to-morrow in search of Bell's sister—I suppose you have some clue to her whereabouts if you and her brother were chums for fifteen years—this is the very last time that I will call myself sister of yours!"

Bulteel looked at her steadily, without a word; his face seemed worn and old in the dim light; something she had said had stung him to the very quick, and in a moment she was sorry for her impetuosity, though she was too proud to confess it. They had been such good friends lately, and she had discovered so much in her brother to admire and esteem. Why had this stupid discussion, which after all was no business of hers, arisen to break down the better understanding which had been so lately established between them?

"Yes, I will go up to town to-morrow," John assented slowly, "it will be best as you say"—he spoke like a man in a dream—"it is a pity, May, that you ever had to call yourself sister of mine," he ended irrelevantly.

"Not a pity. When you are yourself, you are as kind and affectionate as a brother should be," she said, relenting a little; "but when you are cold, and bitter, and unnatural, it seems as if we had not a drop of common blood between us. Forgive me for being so passionate, John, but I have always felt so strongly the power of these family ties; while you hold them of no account, and appear to think that brothers and sisters are no nearer to each other than other people! And probably that poor girl feels as I do! Have you any means of finding out what has become of her?"

"I am not sure, I will do my best,"

stammered John; but in truth the only fact that he had ever known of John Bell's family history, was, that he was an orphan and an only child!

CHAPTER XI. A FACE FROM THE PAST.

THE week that John Bulteel spent in London was not uneventful, though he failed in accomplishing the object which May had taken so deeply to heart, the discovery of Bell's sister. He put up at an old-fashioned hotel near the Strand, and spent some time in searching out and inspecting certain places connected with the early days of John Bell; an Industrial School where the boy had been placed as a friendless orphan; a City warehouse where he had later been apprenticed, and where he was still remembered by an old overseer, as a "wild boy that you couldn't make nothing of, air; as wouldn't come to no good." But of Bell's family he learnt nothing; they had gone under the waves of this troublesome world, and had not, apparently, had the stuff in them, or the good luck, to re-emerge. No one knew anything about any sister or surviving relation of the murdered man who lay buried beside the water-hole on distant Wambo; if he lay there, unmourned, unwept, it was because there were none left to remember him. John could go back to Bulteel with a clear conscience as regarded Bell, and could satisfy May that every effort had been made to discover the sister, in whom she had so suddenly interested herself, without avail.

There was a queer, satirical smile on John's face in those days, which Arthur Twisden, keen to observe changes of expression, noticed with curiosity: "The fellow looks as if he were playing a game of chance with himself," Mr. Twisden decided, though that did not enlighten him much. He invited John to dine with him at the Grafton, and, later, proposed an adjournment to some theatre; but John seemed more inclined for a quiet evening and some conversation, and as they had the smoking-room almost to themselves, Arthur felt that by the end of the evening he should probably be in possession of any new idea which had taken hold of his friend's mind.

"Love, most likely," said Arthur to himself, settling comfortably back in his chair, "though what there can be in Bulteel's case—if it is a case—to give him that queer look of anxious uncertainty, I

can't imagine! If I had a property like Bulteel at my back, I shouldn't have a moment's anxiety about my success with any woman alive, if I had made up my mind to win her; and Bulteel, if he only knew it, has a far stronger personality than I have, and might compel any woman to love him—always excepting his own sister! But that is a case of Greek meeting Greek! He doesn't know his own power; well, here goes for confidences—Bulteel, you've got something on your mind!"

"You're very sharp," said John, turning round in his chair and facing his friend, "and you're right; I believe I ought to make my will——"

"Oh!" said Arthur laughing, "is that all? Of course you ought, and we can see about it to-morrow, if you like; but I was expecting a less business-like confession, and the will might stand over, in that case, until the other affair was arranged——"

"What other affair are you talking about?"

"I fancied—my dear fellow, don't be offended—but I fancied, from your serious demeanour and devotion to tobacco, that you were going to confide a love-affair to me; in which case, the settlements and the will could be drawn up together."

"I have not the slightest intention of ever marrying——"

"Stuff and nonsense! I beg your pardon, Bulteel; but, of course, that is—bosh! What do you mean to do with Bulteel, then?"

"That is my affair," said John stiffly.

"Entirely. I spoke without thinking, not out of curiosity; but you must excuse me if I again risk offending you. A young man like you, the last of an old name, is bound to marry and leave heirs to his property, whatever his personal inclinations may be."

"Bulteel is not entailed—and even if it were, there is James Bulteel to follow me——"

"An old fellow over sixty, who lives in poultries and flannel! The bare thought of inheriting after you would give him a fit, and extinguish your name and race."

"Well, I have no intention of risking his existence. I mean to leave everything to May, without reservation—her husband can take the name of Bulteel, and her children can inherit the property of their forefathers."

John's eyes were fixed closely and pene-

tratingly upon his friend. Arthur shifted a little uneasily in his chair and his cheeks flushed slightly; he laughed a nervous, little laugh as he answered:

"This is all very well, but you must not let a slight rebuff put you altogether out of conceit with matrimony; I take it that you have met with a refusal, and that has decided you hastily to give up all thoughts of marriage. A few months hence you will see this in a different light, and so, probably, will the lady. Give her another chance, and you will not have to make arrangements for your sister's children inheriting Bulteel!"

"There is no lady in the matter. I have never asked any woman on earth to be my wife, and never shall."

"Whew!" whistled Twisden under his breath, "well, I beg your pardon. I am quite at fault, it seems."

"There is no mystery," John said impatiently, throwing the end of his cigar into the fire, and sitting up; "I wish to make a will in my sister's favour, as she is the only person alive that I—that I have belonging to me. I ask you as a lawyer, am I in any way wronging old Bulteel down in Warwickshire by diverting everything to her? No?" as Arthur shook his head, "very well, that is all I wanted to know. I believe it was the old Squire's idea, at one time, before he heard that his prodigal son was not turning out such a rascal as he expected; anyhow, he had land of his own, and money in the bank. It is curious how people prefer leaving their money where there is money already; for my own part, my sympathies go to the poor devils who have nothing, and nobody belonging to them! But, I suppose, if the Squire had never heard of the success of Wambo, he would have done as I am doing, and have made May sole heiress. By-the-by, Twisden, I am going to run the risk of offending you, now; will you let me ask you a few personal questions in return for the good advice you have been giving me?"

"Of course, old fellow."

"You and May have grown fond of each other, haven't you, in all these years? You are the only man with whom she cares to be intimate——"

"I can't answer for May, you know," Twisden replied, pulling his brown moustache and looking decidedly uncomfortable, "it would be very cool in me if I spoke for both of us; but it is true I am very fond of her, in fact, I love her with all my heart!"

"But you have never asked her to marry you, I think!" John spoke slowly and as if he had no desire but to learn certain facts.

"Hang it! No; how could I? Upon my word, Bulteel, you ask very odd questions. Have you any objection to me? Am I keeping anybody else away?"

"Not at all. I only wished to know—if you will bear with me a little—why, loving May, as you say, with all your heart, you have never proposed to her?"

"Because I have only five hundred a year, and I'm afraid I've grown accustomed to wanting the best part of my income for myself; I could not ask a girl, brought up as May has been, to leave Bulteel and live upon eight hundred a year, which would be our united income. When your father was alive, I believe he seriously thought of making May a considerable heiress; you know he was very fond of me—he often used to wish I was his own son! By Jove, Bulteel, I sincerely beg your pardon; I was quite forgetting to whom I spoke! Well, he gave me to understand that, if I went in for May, I should have his consent and goodwill, and he would make things smooth for us until I got a senior partnership; but his death and your reappearance quite did away with that notion, and I was only too glad that I had not spoken to May, and that my old friendly footing with her had never been disturbed. There, Bulteel, you have the whole story!"

There was a moment's pause; then, "Would the addition of her name to yours be any objection?" John said quietly.

"My dear Bulteel, am I to understand that—of course nothing would be an objection of that sort—but——"

Arthur Twisden, for once in his life, did not know what to say.

John got up and held out his hand.

"I must be going. No! don't come with me—I've got a confounded headache, and shall drive back to my place. I'll write to you—if I don't see you again. Good night! I'm glad we've had this chat together—it is always best to speak out between friends. You will be coming down to Bulteel, before long?"

"Yes, if you'll have me!" Arthur felt suddenly rather shy of his friend, and was glad to remember there was a business side to their talk. "About that will,

shall we get it prepared, or will you let Taper know about it? I would rather he took your instructions than I."

"If I don't come round to Bedford Row, you shall hear from me."

At the corner of the Strand there was a block of theatre-leaving vehicles; Bulteel's hansom, going the opposite way to the most of them, had to wait a considerable time to pass. And the bright flare of gas-lamps fell full upon a face out of the past; a face, at sight of which the master of Bulteel leant back in the shadow, sick and giddy, as the Present dissolved to nothingness before him, and the Past rose up out of its shallow grave and stared upon him, the hot air of a Queensland summer seeming, all of a sudden, to fill the soft November night! John Bulteel was never mistaken in a face, and he had seen that of George Strutt, the overseer on Wambo, under the gas-light of the Strand.

Next morning there was but one other small piece of business to be settled. Mr. Bulteel paid a visit to a City lawyer, whose yearly business scarcely equalled the amount that Messrs. Taper, Twisden, and Son got through in a week; remained with him rather less than an hour; came away with a blue sealed envelope safe in his breast-pocket; and caught the 1.25 down train, telegraphing for his cart to meet him at Barkham. His headache had quite left him; he was brisk and alert, and anxious to be home again; some old words that he had picked up, goodness knows where, ran in his head: "What thou doest, do quickly!"

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BY LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE exigencies of society demanded that Tilly should appear in Lady Clavering's drawing-room that evening. She would not stoop to pretend that she was ill; and the world, unfortunately, is not primitive enough to accept the unvarnished truth.

"I have been hearing unpleasant things about my accepted lover and future husband, and even more unpleasant things about myself, and I feel in no mood for dancing and small talk," could hardly be conveyed in any note without giving offence. Besides, when she began to dress, the feverish energy that had helped her to walk all the long way home was still upon her and made her welcome any new form of excitement. It was only when she was ready and waiting for her companion that she became aware that she was very tired, and, with the physical reaction, came the mental. The pity which had melted her heart was hardening into disgust. She was in a mood of revolt, of fire and anger against Jessie, and of something like revulsion from Fred.

She still said, "it is false;" but she also said, "suppose even a part of it were true?" and the very imagined possibility of such a thing went to swell her sense of the hatefulness of everything.

Not to see Fred again for days, for weeks, till the memory of those burning words had faded a little was her strongest wish; but in due time the carriage was announced, and she had to rise and go, knowing that in a few minutes she must meet him.

Fred had arrived first, and was waiting for her in the hall. He had his own reasons for being anxious to secure her at once, before any other fascinating gentleman could claim her. He hoped to carry her off to some quiet corner, where they might have an uninterrupted talk. Since his engagement, a rankling sense of dissatisfaction had mingled with his triumph, and materially lessened it; with the advance of spring, she was more constantly engaged, and he rarely saw her alone; when, by a happy chance, he did secure her ear, she always seemed to hold his ardent speeches, as it were, at arm's length—sometimes seriously, sometimes with dimpling mischief, but always with the effect of making him a trifle ridiculous.

Fred cared as little as most people to be made ridiculous, and he thought that the subject of his marriage ought to be treated more seriously. It was an important matter to him—he did not like to remember how important—and he meant to entreat Tilly to-night to fix some definite time.

His interview with her uncle had done nothing to soothe his sensitive pride; Uncle Bob, indeed, received him with rejoicing, but he made it a little too apparent, perhaps, that Fred had been chosen, not so much for his personal charm and fascination, as for a certain fitness in his circumstances which suited the millionaire's scheme. He had said in effect to the suitor—or so, at least, it seemed to him—

"You are poor; you haven't a sixpence to call your own, and you've no ground to be stuck-up about your family, for there isn't a pin's difference between it and my own; if I am willing to make you rich in goods and gear, you'll mind that you owe it all to me. Take it and spend it, and enjoy it; it's no bargain, my lad; it's a

free gift; if you had had anything to exchange for it, it would never have been yours."

Fred would, reasonably, have liked a different reception.

"You are the smartest and handsomest young fellow I have met, and therefore I give my best treasure to you," would have sounded sweeter even if it had not been strictly true. Fred had the desire to be loved for himself that is native to us all; and Uncle Bob's clumsy attempt to regard him mainly as an instrument to work out his own glorification, did nothing but awake in Fred a creeping doubt as to the value of the riches for which he was to pay so dear.

This was how matters stood on the night of Lady Clavering's opening "at home" for the season. Fred had made up his mind on two points: first, that he would persuade Tilly to marry him before summer; and, second, that having married her, he would take a longish farewell of Uncle Bob. Gratitude has its limits; Fred set them at an occasional letter to his benefactor, and, perhaps, an interview biennially in some conveniently rural spot. He had no mind to spoil the value of the free gift by seeing too much of the donor.

Tilly was glad of the semi-darkness of the wide hall which hid her face in the first moments of their meeting. She was afraid of what it might betray. Her ear was critical, as it had never been before, for every inflection of tone in his greeting.

"You are late," he said; "I thought you were never coming."

"I think it is just the hour we named," she said, wondering a little to find her voice quite steady.

"Ah, well," he said, "the minutes always look hours till you come."

He said it as if he meant it, and so he did. He loved her in his own way; he had made a hundred pretty speeches in his life which meant nothing but a felicitous stringing of words, but he had never made one which was more sincere.

She suffered him to draw her hand within his arm and to lead her to the door of the cloak-room. There he had to resign her; but he waited till she came out, and he followed her and her chaperon up the crowded staircase, where he distractedly received his portion of welcome from the smiling hostess. But he found a chance of whispering to Tilly:

"This is our dance; you promised it

me. You haven't forgotten? If you would rather not dance yet, I can find a seat."

She paused irresolute a moment.

"Yes," she said gravely, "I remember." She turned to her chaperon.

"I am going to dance with Mr. Temple," she said.

The chaperon indicated a certain spot where she would be found waiting to guard Tilly's unpartnered moments, and they left her.

The music of a waltz was striking up; but Fred could not waste his chances in dancing, and she made no objection when he led her to the last of a suite of rooms unfilled as yet, and found a curtained recess where they could talk undisturbed.

Tilly had dressed that night with no eyes for her young beauty, and with hardly a thought of choice. She had forgotten to put on either necklace or bracelet, and the result was an extreme simplicity and a severity which was almost puritanical, and which coincided with a new gravity of expression. It brought out her beauty strikingly, and more than one pair of eyes followed the two as they passed from the drawing-room together. Fred was conscious of some inner change in her which, on the whole, he was inclined to interpret favourably; she was, at least, not in a laughing or teasing mood. He might count upon her listening to what he had to say.

"Sweetheart," he began, when they were safe from interruption, "our engagement is getting quite old now."

"Is it?" she said wonderingly. To her it was very new; so new that she had not wholly realised it yet.

"Very old, as engagements go. Quite old enough for us to think of the next step."

She did not help him, but that was natural. He changed the form of his appeal.

"You remember that day in the old City church, where your friend was married? I suppose it was the scent of the roses you wore; but the thought of summer haunted me that day, and all the time it was two other people I saw standing at the altar, and joining hands, and going away together, not into winter snow, but into beautiful summer weather, and being together for evermore. The summer is almost here, Tilly, and I want to spend it with you."

Her face had no response in it, and the

passive hand he held was cold ; she shook her head faintly.

"Why not?" he asked, anticipating her objections ; "is there anything so grave to hinder?"

"It is far too soon. My uncle has no thought of our marriage—yet."

"But you," he said with a jealous pang, "this is a question for you to decide."

"My decision must be the same as his. I have had him all my life;" there was a note of pleading in her voice. "He has been everything to me; don't ask me to leave him before he can spare me."

This was, undoubtedly, rather hard on Fred—to have an uncle preferred before him. He recognised that the task he had set himself was more difficult than he had supposed it, and he summoned all his patience.

"I know that I owe everything to him," he said, making the admission with what grace he could; "I should never have been anything but the veriest crawling worm but for his—his generosity," the word stuck somewhat in his throat. "He proposes to make me rich—well, to a man who has been a beggar for five-and-twenty years, that's a great deal more of a boon than you can understand; but he has given me the right to claim you, and that is worth all the riches in the world. And having given me that right, he can't reclaim it, or take away the charm of it, by making arbitrary conditions now. He has sanctioned our marriage; and a week or two, or a month or two, earlier will make no difference to his feelings about it. If he consents, you will not refuse?"

Her head had been averted while he spoke; but at his question she turned and looked up with visible reluctance. She spoke in answer to an inward compulsion: the poison of Jessie's words had entered into her mind, and tinged her thoughts, in spite of her determination to believe in him.

"Why are you in such a hurry, Fred?"

It was a strange question to ask a lover, and Fred even found it faintly amusing; but there was a shadow of reproach in his answer.

"My dearest, if you understood how much I love you, you would not ask that. I am in a hurry to make my happiness greater; to rescue it beyond hazard."

Jessie Temple had much to answer for. But for her, would the paralyzing doubt ever have entered Tilly's mind—"if I were as poor as he, would he be in such

haste to grasp happiness?" This, too, was unfair to Fred, since he had a right to take pleasure in her wealth, provided always he loved her more than it.

Tilly vaguely felt that she was taking distorted views; but she did not know how to get back to a proper angle for looking at matters dispassionately, and she took refuge from her embarrassment by saying:

"We do not know each other well enough."

This was undoubtedly true as far as her knowledge of him went; she knew nothing of those bills of his that were out; of that innocent little club where bacarat was played for stakes that were hardly in proportion to the salary of a Civil servant; of other things, perhaps. "There are other things," Jessie had said with a kind of fierce awe in her bitter voice; "but what do I know of them?"

What did she know, indeed, or Tilly either, as she looked at him with those beautiful troubled eyes and said:

"I don't feel as if I knew you well enough yet, Fred."

"Heaven grant," he said to himself, "that she may never know anything of me, which would cause her a pang of shame." He was humbled before her innocent goodness, and there was something of grieved sorrow in his voice as he said:

"What can I do to make you believe in me?"

If he had been a consummate actor, he could not have said anything more fitted to help his cause.

She was touched and moved; his words, his glance, seemed to reproach the doubts that had struggled within her. In that yielding moment she might have granted him all he wished, had not an unlooked for interruption come to cut short their talk.

One or two couples had sauntered in and out of the room quite as intent upon each other as the pair in the windowed recess; but this time it was a servant whose business was with Fred.

"The gentleman is waiting below, sir," he said, and he presented Fred with a card on which a few pencilled words were scribbled.

Fred read them with a frown of annoyance and muttered protest.

"It's John," he said, turning to Tilly; "our precious cousin. Wants to see me, he says. I suppose I'll have to go—presently. I wonder what brings him? Something he imagines of more importance than it is, no doubt."

Fred's tones were light to scorn, but a hundred disagreeable possibilities were darting through his mind. That past, which was a sealed book to Tilly, was pretty well known to John, who had at times had an unpleasantly near acquaintance with it. If it should be— Fred paled before the supposition to which he would not give a form in his thoughts. He was inwardly wondering how soon he could get away, when to his surprise Tilly broke in with an almost agitated urgency:

"John? John Temple? Oh, go; go at once! It must be something serious. Perhaps my uncle— Why don't you go?"

"Shall I not take you back to Mrs. Lester first?"

"Oh, no; I shall wait here. You will come back at once and tell me?"

There was something almost imperious in the way in which she waved him off. She withdrew into the furthest corner of the window-seat, where a fold of the heavy curtain almost concealed her, and the crawling moments looked like hours till Fred came back to her.

There was reassurance in his step, in the whimsical, half-annoyed lines of his brow. He was so lightened of his own anxiety that he half forgot hers, till she put out her hand and grasped his arm.

"What is it?" she said in a whisper.

"Nothing, nothing," he said reassuringly, while he captured the hand and held it between his own. "I believe he's mad. What do you think he has come here for?"

"How can I tell?" she said, with a sigh of relief.

"To see you. He says he wants to speak to you a moment. Nothing very urgent, but something he has got on his foolish old mind to say; and he couldn't think of any other way than to come here and take his chance. Now, would anybody but John ever have conceived of such a plan?"

"What does he want to say?" she asked, shrinking back a little.

"Perhaps," said Fred, whose spirits had rebounded now that ugly sense of danger no longer oppressed him. "Perhaps he wants to warn you against me, before it is too late. He didn't confide in me, but that he naturally wouldn't do if my guess is right."

"That wouldn't be very like him," she said, with a hint of scorn.

"You don't need to see him, unless you like. I'll tell him you are engaged for

this dance; it will be perfectly true, for we haven't had ours yet."

"Is he downstairs? Will you take me to him?" she said.

He took her down by slow degrees between groups of new arrived guests, who were moving up, and others who now went down a step, and now paused to greet an acquaintance. There were people in the hall too, and many servants; but the room which they at last reached was untenanted, except by one tall, broad-chested man with a red-brown beard.

"Here he is!" said Fred gaily. "See, Tilly, they read his native honesty at a glance, and trusted him among all this wealth of furs!"

It was an unlucky allusion, but it made Tilly hold out both hands in welcome.

"You are very good to spare me a moment," John said, understanding her generous action. He took her hands for an instant in his own, and then loosed them gently.

"I can tell you she is!" said Fred, wagging his head, "and I am good, too, to spare her; you don't know how good, you old Diogenes, for I don't believe you ever danced in your life. Don't keep her too long, or I shall become ungovernable."

Tilly was the first to break silence when they were alone. "What is it, John?" she asked.

The room in which, in the stress and hurry of the hour a distracted servant had put them, had been used as an overflow cloak-room. By daylight it probably declared itself that melancholy thing—a breakfast room—because nobody dreamed of breakfasting in it; but the furniture was now all huddled into corners where its shabbiness was concealed by a drapery of cloaks, shawls, and great-coats: the limp and pendent garments, each with its distinguishing ticket whitely glimmering on it, looked, to Tilly's excited fancy, like so many ghostly eavesdroppers drawing near to listen to what John had to say. A single gas-jet, flaring above their heads and thickening the shadows in the corners, helped out the illusion. Even John seemed to be influenced by it, for he turned and thrust an investigating hand and foot among the wraps.

"There's no one there," he said with an embarrassed laugh, coming back to her.

"Is it treason, stratagem, or plot you have to reveal?" she said, speaking lightly.

"No, no," he said, "not that. Still it's a thing I don't much care to say."

He threw out his chest as if he would inhale a draught of courage.

"You see a great deal of Behrens, don't you?"

"Yes," she said wonderingly; "Uncle Bob does at least. He is with him daily."

"Ah!" said John, "so I hear. "Do you think you could persuade him to be less with this Behrens?"

Instead of answering she had a question to ask in her turn.

"Is there any reason why they shouldn't be together?"

"It's an unfair sort of friendship," he answered evasively. "The one man has experience, skill, knowledge of business and the world, and the other is as simple as a child."

"But that shouldn't make it unfair, unless the one makes a wrong use of his superior knowledge. John," she broke off, "will you tell me quite plainly?—I can understand better, much better than I once did, that there are unworthy people, and people with base motives in the world. Do you wish me to understand that Mr. Behrens is one of these?"

"I can't go so far as that," he said; "I've no right to go so far; but I don't like what I hear of him."

"Can you trust what you hear?"

"I think I can—otherwise I should not be here."

"It isn't so easy nowadays," he said, beginning to pace the room, "to tell a bad man from a good. In the old-fashioned story books you spotted your villain in the first page, and you had him of the same inky colour all through, you had no trouble about recognising him; but in the world we've got ourselves toned to such a uniform colour, that there's no telling which of us started white and which black."

"What do you dislike about him?" she asked, bringing him back to the point.

"Well, a good deal," he said slowly; "more than I could easily explain; but I'll give you one ground of uneasiness. Perhaps you know that your uncle has trusted a great deal of money to him for investment?"

"I know that it is money they talk about," she said, with an anxious look. "Uncle Bob thinks he ought to be a great deal richer than he is."

"Yes," said John; "and that is the sort of wish Behrens is born to encourage. There are ways of growing rich even in his line, which are fair and legitimate; but there are ways which may easily enough be

—the other thing. This man practically has the control of your uncle's means, and it takes a steady head and a scrupulous hand for a charge like that."

"You think he might make a bad use of his power?"

"I think he might use it to serve his own ends."

"What am I to do?" she asked urgently. She was standing under the gaslight and it illuminated her face and showed it to be full of trouble.

John's face was troubled too. He greatly disliked his task, for it was not in him to be a cordial hater or even a good suspecter; and he grieved to disenchant her, to rob her of one innocent, guileless belief.

"You have great influence over him," he said; "more influence than anyone else—even this Behrens."

"But, if I were to tell Uncle Bob his friend was a bad man, he wouldn't believe me," she said naively.

"Very likely not," he smiled. "He would still less believe it if he knew the accuser," he thought; but he kept this sting to himself. "And you wouldn't want him to believe without some proof. There is no need to go into the question of goodness or badness at all. So far, I dare say, no great mischief is done. I only want you to use your persuasiveness to keep him from investing any more money by his friend's advice. I hear of a company about to be promoted in which he will probably have a very large interest; they will propose him as a director. Get him to refuse. Persuade him, at least, first to get his lawyer to look into the matter—to withhold his signature. If you find all this too difficult, perhaps you can find some way of inducing him to put off clinching matters for a while. Delay would do as well as anything."

"I will try," she promised. "I don't think that I could interfere in the business part without blundering hopelessly; but I might persuade him to wait. Tell me," she said gravely, "supposing he did put his money into this company, what would be the result?"

"Very probably that he would lose it all."

"I don't think that would be such a dreadful misfortune," she said with an impatient sigh.

"It would be a terrible disappointment to him."

"Yes," she acquiesced; "it isn't to be thought of for him."

They were both silent for a space. He was looking at her; he had never seen her more beautiful than in her snow-white draperies, without a hint of ornament; but he had also never seen her look so grave, with so sad a curve of the lips which were made for smiles; so wistful a look in the clear, candid eyes.

"Is that all, John?" she said presently. "I thought perhaps—you brought me some news of the ring."

He shook his head.

"The mystery remains. Never mind; it will be cleared up one day, and if not—well, it has made no difference to you and me."

"But it has to you and our uncle, and yet you want to help him."

"Oh," he said with a sort of surprised indifference, as if he found nothing praiseworthy in his conduct, "I was bound to do that."

"There's one thing more," he said with something of an effort. One thing! he could have said a thousand. He could have told her that he loved her well and truly, and had loved her since the first day he saw her; he could, but for the great restraint he put upon himself, have easily forgotten that he was penniless, and disgraced in the eyes of her guardian, and for a moment, at least, could have held himself worthy to utter all his eager heart. But he had been taught by the severities of life to school himself well, and he had strength enough to face his longing, and master it. Yet the temptation was great and the renunciation proportionately to his honour, for there was a look in her eyes as she lifted them to his, which did not speak well for the happiness that was more to him than his own unhappiness; and it was this look of vague, half-fear, half-trouble, rather than reluctance on his part to speak them that made his words come out at last with a blunt air of constraint.

"I have heard from Fred about you both, and I only wish to say, my dear, God bless you, and may you be as happy as those who love you wish you to be."

She looked beyond him with a pallid face in which the trouble seemed to grow, and she made him no answer; her hands hung straight down at her sides, her lips were hardly parted with a breath; she might have been carved in marble, so still she stood.

John was not even sure that she had heard his words, but a shadow which seemed to pass from her fell deep on his spirit.

The lover was never born who willingly and without a pang resigned the woman of his heart's choice to another; but perhaps this big, simple man touched the supreme height of love when he felt that he would give all he had, or ever dreamed of having, to make Fred worthy of her. "Make her happy, and let all the suffering be mine."

The cousins met by chance next day upon the bustling City pavement. Fred made a motion as if he would go by disdainfully with a tossed-up head—an affront John could have supported tranquilly; but he changed his mind, and stopped his cousin with an imperious sign.

"Well," Fred said, with smothered anger, "you kept Tilly a precious time last night!"

"I had some things to say to her," said John, quietly.

"About me, perhaps," sneered Fred. "I can well believe that your congratulations were so eager and hearty that they took some time to get said."

"There was not much about you."

John's determinedly unruffled aspect was extremely irritating to the young man, who was anxious to pick a quarrel with somebody, and thus to justify his ill-humour.

"Well," he demanded, "what did you talk about? I think I have a right to know, since whatever it was it sent Tilly home."

"Miss Burton would probably be quite willing to tell you. There is no mystery to get into a rage over. We talked chiefly, almost wholly, of Mr. Burton."

"I admire your taste," said Fred, with an ironical shrug. "I try to forget his existence except when it is too grossly forced on me."

"That doesn't come very well from you," said John, with great dryness.

"Doesn't it? Much you know about it. He isn't going to be your uncle-in-law."

He was about to pass on when second thoughts made him pause and turn.

"If that's your topic, you might as well turn it next time to some purpose."

"To what purpose?" demanded John, with sudden fire and energy.

"Oh, nothing that you won't quite enjoy," said Fred, with a wicked smile.

"You always professed yourself anxious to serve me, and you can't do it better than by helping on my marriage as speedily as possible. It's more important than you imagine. I tell you I'm in a confounded hole——" his voice lost its mockery and

took on a doggedness that betrayed his anxiety.

"If you propose to marry to get out of this confounded hole, how much help are you likely to get from me?" John asked with whole deeps of righteous wrath and contempt in his tones.

Fred looked at him, and as he saw his tranquil brows drawn in a frown, and the brown eyes alight with anger, he laughed, and his voice recovered some of the airy mockery which it put on so readily for this big foolish fellow.

"You are a delightful simpleton," he said. "Do you expect me to rehearse my love for all the City to hear?—to give you a rhapsody—perhaps to indite a sonnet to the eyebrow of my mistress here in Fleet Street? Do you want a lesson in the art of love-making? Would you like me to go down on my knees and show you how it is done? I would willingly oblige you, dear cousin, but unfortunately the exigencies of the Patents Office won't permit it, and I daresay the Bank is at this moment clamouring for its most valuable sub-cashier. Good-bye; and next time you lack a subject of talk you can remember that little theme I hinted at."

SOUTH AFRICAN SKETCHES.

LOST.

"DID my missus ever tell you how she and Liza there got lost when we were trekking up from East London last year?" asked my genial host, Tom Carey.

The scene was Klipdrift, on the Vaal River, the time was the year of grace 1872, and Tom Carey and I were sitting at the open doorway of his swish and stone tenement. Inside we could hear the voice of Tom's wife crooning a lullaby to a new arrival, a little pink-and-white baby boy some two or three months old; while running about near us was the Liza in question, a little, blue-eyed, fair-haired girl of some five summers.

In 1872, Klipdrift was the most civilised camp in the then recently-acquired Waterboer's Territory, and had, at the close of 1871, been selected by the Cape Government as the metropolis of the new annexation. There were at least twenty-four houses, some of brick, some of mud and stones, and some of stones alone. These formed an irregular street along the low cliff which overhung the Vaal, and on the

kopje above them was the chaos of mounds and holes, piles of boulders and broken hills of stones, which marked the spot where hundreds of claims had been opened in the palmy days of Klipdrift, before the dry diggings out away on the dusty veldt at De Beer's and Du Toit's Pan had been heard of. Here and there, down towards the drift, stood a ragged tent, a hut of loose stones, or a lean-to shanty made of boards and branches, where one or two impoverished diggers, the owners of the cradles which yet remained on the river brink, still lingered, the remnant of the five thousand men whose tents had, a few months back, whitened the earth, and whose brawny arms had sunk the innumerable pits, and raised the mounds of stone and earth. On the Pniel side of the river the hill was scored and pitted in a thousand directions, while near the stream itself the graceful South African willows, fortunately preserved by a very strict clause of digger law, bowed their feathery arms over the sparkling water.

I said that I had never heard of the occurrence in question, and at the same time expressed my great anxiety to be at once made acquainted with every detail.

"We had been about a year out from home," said Tom, "and were living, as you know, at East London, when the great rush to the Fields took place. It was about December, '70, that dry digging was first talked about, and about the beginning of the following year the rush took place. I had not done so well as I expected at East London. I was neither better nor worse off than when we had left England, and I had expected to be much better off. Anyhow I was not altogether satisfied, and, like everybody else, I thought I had only to go to the Fields to make a fortune. I talked it over with Mary. She was dead against it at first, but, when she saw my mind was bent on going, she gave way; only she insisted on going with me, for I had intended leaving her behind, and I think on the whole she was right. I bought a waggon and a span of oxen, laid in a supply of grub for the journey, and of picks and spades for the diggings, and one morning off we started. We went on from King William's Town to Fort Beaufort, from that to Bedford, and from Bedford to Cradock without accident. We stayed at Cradock two days.

"The first night out from Cradock we outspanned near Zoutpan's Drift, on the Great Fish River, just under the range of

mountains called Bushman's Berg. Next morning when I turned out of the waggon a little before daybreak, not one of my oxen could I see. My boys—I had three of them, one Tottie and two Kaffirs—knew nothing about them; so I swore at them and sent them to hunt them up, one of them down the river and one of them up, as I thought the cattle would be likely to keep near the water; while I started the third up the Burghers Spruit, which runs into the Fish River just there. That done, we had nothing to do but to have breakfast and then sit down and wait.

"The sun was pretty high overhead, it must have been quite noon, and we had seen nothing of the boys, when a Boer coming down the road told me he had seen some stray oxen near Rheboks Fontein, about seven miles up the road. Rheboks Fontein stands about four miles away from the river, so the boy who had gone up stream would not see the oxen. There was nothing to be done except for me to go after them myself, and I didn't like to leave Mary alone with the little one by the waggon; but she said she wouldn't be afraid if I'd promise to come before dark, and as I knew I could easily manage that, I suffered myself to be persuaded and went off. For some way up the road I could see her sitting inside the waggon tilt, waving her handkerchief to me, and then a low hill hid her from sight.

"I reached Rheboks Fontein in about two hours, and found the oxen there. It was then about three o'clock, and as I knew I should not be able to drive back the span by myself in time to reach the waggon before dark, I asked the Boer to let me put them into his kraal for the night so that I could send for them in the morning. He made no difficulty about this, but it took some time to get the cattle into the kraal, and by the time the last was in it was about four o'clock. It would be getting dark about six, so I had just time to get back and keep my promise.

"The evening was beginning to close in when I got in sight of the waggon. I could see the three boys squatting round a fire they had lighted, but no sign of my wife or child. However, I did not feel uneasy, as I thought they were inside the waggon, and, when I had come up, I went up softly and raised the flap of the tilt, to give them a surprise as I thought. They weren't there. I felt quite sick with fright for a moment. Then I thought they were perhaps hiding near to surprise me, and

I looked all round, but they weren't to be seen anywhere. I asked the boys where they were, and they looked at me with their mouths open. Almost beside myself with fright and worry, I asked them if they had seen them when they returned to the waggon. One of the Kaffirs had been back about two hours, and the others about one hour. The first said that there had been nobody with the waggon when he came back, and that he had sat down to wait, thinking I had strolled off somewhere with my wife and child. The other two said the same.

"I believe I went off my head for a bit. I know I ran down to the river, and along the bank shouting 'Mary,' till I was nearly speechless, until Kleinboy, my Tottie, who was a sensible fellow in his way, said it would soon be quite dark, that there was no moon, and that if the misadventure was lost we ought to be looking for her. That brought me to my senses, and all four of us held a consultation. We decided that they could not have crossed the river, therefore it would be useless to search on the other side; and, finally, it was agreed that Kleinboy should go back towards Roodebank, one of the Kaffirs onward to look between the road and the river, while the remaining Kaffir and myself should go to the east of our outspan and search in the kloofs and kopjes of the Bushman's Berg.

"The boy I took with me was the one who had said he had returned to the waggon first, and I did so because the horrible idea had suddenly presented itself to me that perhaps he had murdered them. Of course the idea was absurd. The man could have had no motive for such a deed, but in my distracted condition reason had little to do with my thoughts. In fact the boy had a great regard for me. You know all these people have at least two names—"igama," or name given at the birth, and the "isibonga," or name assumed afterwards, generally in commemoration of some event or deed. Some Kaffirs have several "isibongas." A man is always addressed by his "isibonga," and he only allows his "igama" to be known to his most intimate friends, for he believes that the knowledge of his birth name would enable wizards or witches to do him harm. Well, when this boy first came to me, I asked him his "igama," and he wouldn't tell me; but I learned it after a time by overhearing him talking with a man of his own tribe. It was "U'mpiasi," "The Hyena," and I startled him tremendously

by calling him by it when I next wanted him. He could never make out how I learned it, and regarded my knowledge of it as a proof of my wonderful power. From that moment I could depend upon him thoroughly. It was therefore the height of folly for me to suspect him of harming my wife; but, as I said before, I couldn't get the idea out of my head.

"It soon became pitch-dark, and we stumbled along over stones and rhinoster bushes towards the Berg, the spurs of which stretch down almost to the road. Every hundred yards or so we would stop and holloa, but not a sound did we hear in reply."

A few minutes before Tom had reached this point in his recital, Mrs. Carey, who had succeeded in putting the baby to sleep, had come out, and had seated herself on a low stool by her husband's side, whence, with a hand softly caressing his knee, she had been listening to him. She was not a beauty, but she was a pretty woman, and, what is of far more importance to a husband, a good wife.

"I think, my dear, that you had better take up the thread of the narrative now," said Tom.

I added my entreaties, and Mrs. Carey began:

"When Tom went away after the oxen, I watched him along the road as far as I could see him, and when he went out of sight I felt, for the first time, a little frightened. Everything was so still. There were some tall mountains over to my left that seemed so grand and silent that their height and vastness seemed to weigh on me, while on the other sides were bleak and desolate plains bounded by bare, rocky hills. The stillness and want of life made me feel as if I must cry out, if only to break the awful silence; and at last I had to get inside the waggon with Liza, and let down the flap of the tilt to shut it all out. I had some needlework to do and stitched away, while Liza played with an old rag doll on the floor of the waggon.

"Then occurred something for which I can never account. Whether it was the heat, or the stillness, or what it was, I, who am always so wide awake in the daytime, must have fallen asleep. Such a thing never happened to me before since I came to the Cape. How long I slept, I don't know, but when I awoke I didn't see Liza. I called her, scolding her for getting out of the waggon, and when she didn't answer at once I jumped out to look for her.

"That moment I can never forget. There was no Liza to be seen. How can I find words to say what I felt? My darling was lost. I felt sure of that, for I could see a good long way in every direction, and she was not to be seen. What was I to say to my husband when he came back and asked for our child? How could I tell him that I had neglected my trust and gone to sleep, and allowed her to stray away? I began to cry, of course; but that did no good, so I dried my eyes and tried to think. Then I saw the yellow flowers on the bushes down by the river, and thinking she might have seen them and have gone down to pick some, I ran there to look. Among the bushes I found her little hood, which had been knocked off by a branch, I suppose, and which, child-like, she had forgotten to pick up. At first I was seized with a horrible fear that she had fallen into the water and been drowned, but I saw that it was so shallow that that was impossible. Near the hood I found some pieces of pink heath, which the poor little dear had been picking. I had great hopes of finding her then, and I called her as loud as I could, but no answer came. I went up the river-side for a long way, but there was no sign, so I came back again and went down.

"Some way down below our waggon I came to a dry watercourse which ran into the river. The bottom of it was covered with sand and pebbles, and the high banks had flowering shrubs on them. I thought it was the sort of place the child would be tempted to wander up, and I turned up it. I soon knew I was right, for I found some more of the pink heather bells dropped on the sand. I walked on faster than ever now. The sun seemed to be going down. I didn't know how long I had been searching, for I did not know what the time was when I started out, but it seemed as if I had been searching for hours. Still I went on and on. I passed several other watercourses, which opened into the one in which I was, and of these I was afraid to think, for perhaps she had turned up one.

"At last the ravine, for it had grown to be a ravine by this time, with sloping heights on each side, divided into two branches. I was in despair—I sat down and sobbed aloud. Which branch was I to take? Then I blamed myself for wasting time, and jumped up and hastened up the one to the left. The day was closing in. I felt that I must find my little one before it was dark.

How could I leave her in the desolate wilderness all night? I stumbled on over the rocks which now lay thickly in the bed of the ravine, where thorny bushes seemed to spring up out of the growing darkness. At last, oh! joy, I saw a little shoe lying on a flat stone. I knew then that she could not be far off, and I called her. There was no answer, but I went on, looking about very carefully, and presently my heart rejoiced to see my little one lying fast asleep under a thick bush. Her little head was pillowed on her arm, a half-dried tear still glistened on her cheek—she had cried herself to sleep, poor dear—and a crumpled bunch of heath lay beside her.

"I needn't tell you," said Mrs. Carey in her soft voice, "that I snatched her up and covered her with kisses. Her poor little foot was out, she was tired out and hungry; but I, alas! had nothing to give her. I soothed her in my arms, and then thought of going back again. But it was now pitch-dark. I could not move without striking against a rock, or running into a thorned bush. Now that the excitement was over, and that I had found my lost one, my strength seemed gone, my knees gave way under me, and I sank to the ground.

"Then, for the first time, I felt frightened about myself, and thought of my husband, and the state of mind he would be in on returning to the waggon and finding us both missing. I thought of the wild beasts, of leopards, and hyenas, and jackals, and wondered what my husband would do, if he came up the ravine in the morning looking for us, and found our half-eaten bodies. My mind ran on in a strange way. He would be beside himself with grief, I knew, for he loved us both. But, then, nothing could bring us back to life again. He would perhaps marry again, and I hoped his second wife would think as much of him as I had.

"While I was thinking all this, a large bird or bat swooped close past us in the darkness, nearly brushing my hair with its wings. I felt sick with terror. I expected every moment that it would swoop back again and peck at us, perhaps tear our eyes out. Liza was fast asleep in my arms, and I crept close up to the wall of the ravine, and crouched under a thick bush which seemed to protect me. Hours seemed to pass. Hours of intense darkness and awful solitude. Now and then strange sounds, the whoops of birds and the cries of animals, were borne down to me. Once

I put my hand down to support myself a little on the hard ground, and some clammy thing wriggled from under it. I suppose it was a lizard; but my first thought at the time was of a poisonous snake.

"A long time after this I heard a bark quite near. I thought it was my husband, tracking me perhaps with a dog, and I called out as loud as I could. As I did so, twenty or thirty different barks, answering I suppose the first one, sounded on the cliff above me, and presently some stones fell down from above. I wondered what it could be. I did not know if there were wolves or wild dogs in the country, but I thought perhaps it was a pack roaming about for food. Suppose they discovered me. I kept as still as possible, scarcely daring to breathe. Then, after a little while, some more stones and gravel fell from above. A stone must have struck Liza; she woke, and, frightened at finding herself in the dark, began to cry. Then at once arose a chorus of barks and grunts, and I heard scrambling noises on the mountain-side. I expected every moment to see a pack of wolves rushing upon us. I pictured to myself their glaring eyes and gleaming white teeth, and I remembered accounts I had read of people being overtaken by wolves in Russia. I could see distinctly a picture I had seen of a woman in a sleigh, dropping her baby out at the back, to delay the wolves and give her a chance of escape. I got up and tried to climb up a thorny bush; but it was too small to bear our weight, and I only tore myself with the long, sharp thorns. But I could put Liza in it, and I did, reaching up as high as I could to place her in a fork, and tying her to the stem with my handkerchief.

"I had hardly finished when I heard some more scrambling, and over the top of a rock, which stood out against the sky, I saw what seemed to be the head and shoulders of a man covered with hair looking at me with eyes that shone with a greenish-yellow light. I was so startled I gave one loud scream, when, oh! joy, I heard two fearful yells and then a voice crying, 'Mary,' from the mountain-side lower down. I put my hands to my mouth and called as loud as I could, and again came the answer. It was my husband. The hairy man did not seem to like the noise I made; he grunted once or twice, and then disappeared behind the rock. I waited, trembling, thinking he was perhaps creeping along to seize me.

But presently I heard voices and the noise of people walking on the opposite side of the ravine. I called out—"Here, Tom." He came hurrying down over the rocks in a headlong way, and the next moment I was in his arms. In a moment he thought of Liza, but I smiled at him to let him know she was safe, for I couldn't speak, and I showed him her in the bush. Poor little thing, how frightened and scratched she was!

"Tom had his Kaffir boy with him, the same who is with us now. He soon collected some dry sticks, and we lit a fire. It was impossible for me to walk back in the dark, and the ground was too rough for Tom to carry me, so we sat down to wait for daylight. It was not long in coming, and as soon as it was light we went back to the waggon. Tom said we had wandered quite five miles from it."

"And what did the hairy man turn out to be?" I asked.

"Oh, it was a baboon. It was their barking I had heard. It seems there was a troop of them on the hill-side."

"Yes," said Carey, "it was their barking that helped us to find her. U'mpiasi and I had passed two-thirds of the night wandering up the kloof and about the spurs of the Bushman's Berg, shouting ourselves hoarse, and had nearly given up all hope of finding them till next morning, when U'mpiasi's quick ears caught some distant sound. He crept on to the top of a ridge, and lay flat on the ground to listen. Then he said it was baboons barking, and that he thought, from the noise they were making, that they had discovered something and were signalling to each other. You can imagine how I rushed off in that direction, for I thought that if they had discovered Mary and Liza, they might attack them. We hurried along, up hill-sides, over rocks and stones, and down again into kloofs choked with thorn bush, sometimes tripping over unseen rocks or tumbling down steep banks that we hadn't noticed in the darkness, until, from a ravine below us, and not far off, suddenly rose a scream. We yelled back, to scare the baboons, if they were interfering, and ran on. You know the rest."

"And what account had Liza to give of herself?"

"She said that when her mother was asleep, she got tired of playing with her doll, and climbed out of the waggon. Then she saw the yellow flowers of the acacias down by the river, and ran to pick some. While she was playing about there, she

said a little grey bird came and fluttered quite close to her, and then sang and twittered, and sat on a twig near by. It seemed so tame she tried to catch it; when it flew off a little way, and twittered again, looking back at her. She said she thought it was calling her to play with it, and she followed it along till she had gone a great way and was very tired. Then she lost her shoe, and the stones hurt her foot; so she sat down and cried till she fell asleep. I've no doubt she followed a honey-bird. Those birds, you know, always try to attract one's attention by chirping and chattering in an excited way, and then lead you to the wild bees' nest; flying on a little way at a time, and then stopping and looking back to see if they are followed. It's just the thing to lead a child away."

AUTUMN IN THE STREETS.

DWELLERS in London have at least one advantage over their country brethren in autumn. The year is not so long in dying, and regrets for the summer we have lost are tempered by the anticipation of the gaiety and bustle of winter. One good shake, and our dead leaves are all on the ground, are shovelled up and carted away, and then we turn to the long rows of lighted streets, to the glare, the bustle, and general whirl of cabs and omnibuses, to exhibitions, theatres, parties, and universal distraction. It is the quick-step after the funeral march—regrets have been fired away in a parting volley—and we turn to the duties and pleasures of life with something like an appetite for our daily fare. The baked-potato can is greeted like an old friend, the muffin-bell suggests not so much the knell of parting summer as the bright fireside, and the glittering tea equipage.

Snug beside our fires, we regret all the less our holiday quarters—the coast, the highlands, the lakes, the rivers. Who would change, just now, the horizon of roofs and house-tops for chilly tarns and snow-topped mountains?

And then the streets have discounted winter already. "Three months after date pay to my order a turkey, a hamper of wine and spirits, raisins and currants for my Christmas pudding, and everything else I may want to keep the coming season in the old-fashioned festive way." You will get your bill negotiated at any street corner where the grocer has set up his store.

or the publican opens his glittering doors. I can put down my shilling now, and enjoy the prospect of a good York or Westphalian ham, on the condition, naturally, of being regular and constant in future payments—which how can I fail to be, with such an end in view? As for Christmas-cards, they are already rather “*passés* ;” we are thinking more about our greetings for Easter. Our Christmas annuals are going to press, and jaded editors are refreshing themselves with the savour of Spring numbers.

All this time the crackers and squibs, the fiery Catharine-wheels, the rockets and Roman candles are waiting for us ; and premature explosions in back gardens set all the dogs a-barking, and send Grimalkin flying over the walls. The parti-coloured football players appear with the fogs and shortening days ; and what a procession is setting in for dingy London streets and back yards of all the wandering tribes who have been working the country fairs and feasts till chill October warned them off their camping grounds ! If the flowers are no longer blowing and growing in the costermongers’ barrows, there are ferns and heaths, evergreens, and modest bushes. About Covent Garden the shops are crammed full of bulbs to make gay our houses and windows in the very bitterness of February gales and the east winds of March. And if the green fruit season is over, as far as the rush and press of trucks and waggons are concerned, and steamers hurrying across from distant ports, there is still all the work of storing and distributing to be done ; and the dried fruits from summer climes are everywhere making themselves manifest in grocers’ windows, while walnut shells litter the pavements, and suggest the crackling of Christmas fires.

Now are scene-painters and costumiers working double tides with flats, and carpenters’ scenes, and flies, and all the other devices, preparing for the coming flood of winter sightseers ; with wigs, and masks, and gorgeous spangled garments ; with giants, dwarfs, and flocks of strange beasts and birds belonging to the zoology of fairyland. The amateur, too, is at work, rehearsing songs, and arranging comic effects for the smoking concerts which will soon be coming on. Schools of arms, too, are collecting their pupils—youths from the City and from the Inns of Court, with Donald the hammer-thrower, who is in a tea warehouse, and Sandy the sword-

man, who travels about town for a credit draper. Dancing-classes are beginning to assemble, and programmes of suburban assemblies and quality balls are flying about.

At this time the publishers’ lists and the catalogues of the libraries are becoming of interest. The mists of autumn bring an appetite for new books. The old ones are best, perhaps ; but a new book is like an unexplored country, which offers unknown possibilities to the explorer. And if it comes to old books, there are the book-sales, which have dwindled during the hot weather, but are now drawing dealers and collectors. And here the tables are turned. It is the old books that have the pull ; latest editions are nowhere. And yet to see what a lot of old books may be had for the merest trifle ! Old books huddled together in bundles, and slightly catalogued as “*various*,” and knocked down in twenty seconds for as many pence. Book-sales, after all, are sad, depressing functions ; the dust of ages seems to get into the human system, and clog the pores of fancy.

Cheerful, and noisy enough too, has been the rush of students to the medical schools. Perhaps these young gentlemen require a good deal of boisterous cheerfulness to fortify them against the scenes of suffering and death around them. The medical student, indeed, is somewhat toned down from the Bob Sawyer type of earlier days ; but he is still of a robust and sportive character in a general way, and he contributes his full share to the liveliness of the autumnal term. As for the fully-fledged practitioners, now is their harvest time. Those who rarely trouble the doctor are sending for him now. The annual holiday is over, and the first greeting that London gives to her returning prodigals is generally in the form of an influenza or a stiff attack of bronchitis. Little demons in the way of germs lie in wait for us ; perhaps we have brought them in our baggage from the seaside or the Continent ; anyhow, they work their will on us as we return unwillingly to the mill, and they sprinkle measles and whooping-cough in the nursery, and turn the whole household upside down.

Now we wish that we could look forward to Christmas, and have more holidays then and come home joyfully crowned with ivy and mistletoe, and grow merrier as the nights grow longer ; but we are still a long way from Christmas, and, perhaps, there

are reserved for us days of delicious calm and soft tranquillity, such as November sometimes brings, in defiance of its evil reputation.

Then what more delightful progress than to wander about in London and to float heedlessly upon the full tide of life. Many cities we may visit; all kinds of life we may study; and yet not wander far beyond the cab radius; never are the streets more bright, nor is the whirl of vehicles and passengers more hilarious than when summer is past and the great transformation scene of the year is in full progress.

Even the sparrows seem full of renewed spirits. They, too, we verily believe have had their holiday and have come back with increased zest to their life in town. They have left the corn-fields and the hedge-rows, now getting bare and chilly, and they salute the familiar eaves, the aerial gutters where they were raised as nestlings, and the cat who was their youthful terror.

The cats, too, how delighted they must be that everybody has come home again, and that their solitary vigils with charwoman or care-taker have come to an end.

But there is another aspect of the approach of winter, far more sad and deplorable. There are the hungry, homeless, human waifs and strays, to whom the first touch of frost and sprinkling of snow bring poignant sufferings and misery. Is it not a reproach to our humanity that in this city, teeming with riches, there should be no assured shelter for the unfortunate in the rigours of a, perhaps, semi-Arctic winter? A shelter, a fire, even a meal; is that beyond the powers of our great municipalities to provide whenever the thermometer shows a dangerous degree of cold? A shelter afforded freely to all comers without question, without condition? A bed of straw, a weather-tight roof. It is what we give to the most worthless criminal under our care, and yet we deny it, practically, to hundreds of our fellow creatures.

Again a dark cloud of autumn lowers over us, which mingles with the other and increases its blackness. It is the great army of unemployed—those who have homes, but bare and desolate homes which may be torn from them at any moment. And about this solid nucleus of suffering—mostly patient and uncomplaining, a dark and ragged fringe of

humanity which has ceased to be capable of labour or tolerant of it, and which is ready to snatch at any opportunity for mischief. We look down upon a vista of some of the noblest buildings in London from the vantage point of what used to be called the finest site in Europe. Wonderful the changes there in the past few years. Millions have been spent there—in street improvements, in public buildings, in enormous hotels; the spires and towers of Westminster rise in the distance, and the chief seats of government and administration lie between; and it is here the spectre rises, the threatening spectre of modern civilisation. You may see the apparition on any of these autumn days. A crowd assembles as birds assemble, coming from all points; police, too, are there in force. A meeting has been formed, a man emerges bare-headed from the crowd, a speech is delivered inaudible for the most part, and in dumb show, accompanied by cries, and jeers, and ribaldry from the outer fringe of disorderly people who have scented out the demonstration as the vulture scents its prey. Then there is a cry, "To the Mansion House!" "To Westminster"—or wherever the rendezvous may be—and the meeting breaks up and forms an irregular sort of procession, and so goes clattering through the streets, while prudent tradesmen whirl up their shutters as it approaches. Here and there a banner or threatening emblem makes its appearance, and the police hurrying after, alongside, and in front, seem to drive the crowd as it were a shuttlecock. It might seem easy enough to stamp out such demonstrations; but they are like the embers of fire among dry wood, and smoulder forth all round. The real remedy, indeed, is to stamp out the suffering—the real suffering which gives such things their force and impetus—to isolate poverty, by surrounding it with friendly hands, to organise not charity, but beneficence, and not to repress it, but to let it flow through every accustomed channel, and through many new ones, until the advent of winter shall cease to be either a terror or a reproach.

THE COLONEL'S TALE.

It was late—after midnight—and as we got up from the whist-table and gathered round the fire, Colonel Thornton said: "If you men are not too tired and don't mind

sitting up for another half-hour, I think I can tell you a good story."

We protested we were never less tired and could sit up till morning if necessary. So the Colonel began :

"My father, as you know, was a parson; but he took Orders late in life, after having been fifteen years at the Bar, and the events of which I am going to tell you he, himself, told me as having come directly under his eye when he was a barrister.

"It was at the Monmouth Assizes, in 18—, that a case was tried which became the talk of the neighbourhood and country for years after. My father was sitting in the Court of the Assistant Judge, when a note was brought him from a friend in the adjoining Court, asking him to come and hear a case of more than usual interest, the facts of which were these :

"Sometime before, a farmer's house, near Monmouth, had been broken into and robbed by men disguised and masked, the farmer murdered, and his servant shockingly ill-treated. Among other things which were stolen were two old-fashioned silver brooches, curiously inlaid with malachite, heirlooms of the family, and, although unremitting search was made, and the description of the lost articles made widely known, no trace of the murderers could be found.

"A month or two after the murder, however, a police-officer, in going through a common lodging-house in Bristol, noticed a dissipated-looking sailor lying on a pallet and resting his head on a small bundle. He asked him what it contained, and was told that it was 'only his kit.' The officer, not satisfied, opened the bundle, and almost the first things to fall out were two brooches made of silver and malachite. Struck by their curious beauty, and wondering how such a wretched-looking fellow could have become possessed of them, he suddenly remembered the advertisement and description of the stolen articles.

"How did you come by these ?' he enquired.

"The sailor replied: 'By chance. When I came ashore some time ago, with plenty of money in my pocket, I met an old seaman who was down on his luck, and he offered to sell me these things, which had belonged to his mother. I was pretty flush, and gave him a good price for them, although they were useless to me. And that's all about it.'

"The police-officer, still dissatisfied, took him into custody. He was sent to Mon-

mouth Gaol, the brooches were identified, and he was committed for trial at the Assize on the charge of theft and murder. And," continued the Colonel, impressively, "as my father entered the Court, this man was being placed in the dock.

"Tall beyond the then average height of men, and gaunt, with an unkempt beard and an evil, yellow eye, and though evidently suffering from his long imprisonment, he yet presented a powerful and imposing front. The trial had begun, and he had just been asked the usual question, 'Are you guilty or not guilty ?' and had answered in a hollow voice 'Not guilty, my lord,' when the entrance of one of the Court officials with a gentleman stopped the proceedings for a while. And here I must explain this interruption.

"A few days before, a quiet, gentlemanly man, a Captain Forsyth, of His Majesty's Navy, had arrived at the chief hotel of the town on a fishing excursion; but the weather had been so adverse, that he was obliged to look elsewhere for amusement. Turning to the landlord for information, he was told of this trial as exciting considerable interest; and so it came to pass, that as the prisoner took his place at the bar, Captain Forsyth sent his card to the Judge, who gladly allowed him, as was then the custom, a seat on the bench.

"The case proceeded; witnesses were called to identify the brooches, the servants swore to the figure of the prisoner as resembling that of the murderer; no witnesses were called for his defence—no one defended him; everything pointed to his guilt, and the Jury retired to their room. In a few minutes they returned, and, amid the breathless expectation of the crowded Court, the Foreman announced their opinion that the man was 'Guilty.'

"Directly this word was uttered, the prisoner, who had been leaning as if for support against the side of the dock, raised himself to his full height, stretched out both his hands above his head, and, looking up, exclaimed in a broken voice, 'Not guilty, not guilty.'

"The Judge then asked him, as was usual, if he had anything to say before sentence should be pronounced, and the prisoner cried hoarsely, 'Not guilty, my lord, not guilty; before Heaven and man, I am innocent of this crime. I never set my eyes on the murdered man; I did no murder. Oh! Captain, Captain—' in his vehemence he addressed the Judge as if he were his

officer—'I am as innocent of this crime as the babe unborn.' He paused; then suddenly, in a voice choking with feeling, he exclaimed: 'Yes, yes, only one man can save me now; but he can do it, swear what you may. The Lord be thanked, that man is here!'

"A buzz of astonishment ran round the Court; the feeling of awe that had held the audience changed into one of amazement.

"Point him out to me,' said the Judge.

"The man who can save me,' replied the prisoner, 'sits there beside you,' pointing to the astonished Captain Forsyth.

"The Judge turned to Captain Forsyth and said: 'This man appears to know you. Is it the case?'

"Certainly not,' he replied, much surprised; 'I never saw him before in my life.'

"Oh, Captain,' broke in the prisoner, 'yes, you needn't start, I know you, Captain Forsyth. You are never going to swear away an innocent man's life like that!'

"It is curious, my man,' the Captain replied, 'that you know my name; but I repeat that I never saw you before in my life.'

"What? Not know John Williams, of 'The Neptune? The coxswain of the Captain's cutter?'

"Yes, I know John Williams; but you are not he. John Williams was the smartest man that ever served under me, and never likely to stand where you are now.'

"Captain,' repeated the prisoner, 'I tell you I am John Williams. A long illness, a hard bout of drinking, and this cursed imprisonment have made me what I am. And I will prove it, Captain, I will prove it, if you will only listen.'

"The sensation caused by this dialogue was immense. The Judge, the members of the Bar, and the spectators were equally astonished at the curious turn the affairs had taken, and, though believing the man to be guilty of a desperate deceit to save his life, were eagerly awaiting what should come.

"Captain,' continued the prisoner, 'I am accused of murdering a man here on the twenty-fifth of June, more than nine months ago. Now, tell me, sir, was not John Williams—your coxswain—invalided home from the West African station on the last day of that month?'

"What the man says,' remarked Captain Forsyth to the Judge, 'is perfectly true.

His Majesty's ship, "The Invincible," sailed with our invalided men for England on the thirtieth of June.'

"The prisoner went on: 'Yes, and I arrived in England at the end of July, weak and ill, and, getting my prize-money, went and drank it all away. And that's how it was I was found at Bristol, where I had gone for another ship; and ever since then I have been in this accursed jail.'

"The fellow is plausible enough,' again remarked Captain Forsyth. 'He is certainly about the height of Williams. Well, my man, I suppose you can prove what you say.'

"Ay, ay, Captain! Do you remember, on the tenth of last June, giving orders for a night raid on the native town off which we lay looking out for slavers?'

"Yes, I do, to be sure.'

"And that we were five boats in all. And the first to beach was the Captain's cutter. And the first man to jump out of it was you, Captain?'

"Well, this is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard! And, turning to the Judge, the Captain said: 'Every word of this poor fellow's narrative is true, my lord. He may have picked it up somewhere; but I can't help beginning to think there is something behind. My ship is still on foreign service, and I have only returned to take charge of another one.'

"Well, go on, man!'

"One word more, Captain, and maybe you will believe me. As we were fighting in the town, a great nigger came behind you with his axe and would have cut you in half before you saw him, had not a man rushed between and stopped him with his cutlass; and yet not quite stopped him, for that infernal nigger's axe slipped down the cutlass and gashed the man's head open. Who was that man, Captain?'

"John Williams,' was the reply, 'the coxswain of my cutter.'

"Ay, ay, Captain, and here is the cut which that axe made,' and, bending down, he lifted with one hand his long, untidy hair, and with the other pointed to a huge and fearful scar running for several inches along the side of his head.

"Captain Forsyth leapt from his seat.

"Good Heavens, you are right! But how you have changed! My lord, this poor fellow had not sailed from the African coast when the murder was committed; it is impossible that he could be guilty of it. Williams, you saved my life; I thank God I have been able to save yours!'

"At these words everybody in the Court stood up and cheered the prisoner with the wildest excitement and enthusiasm; the Judge said that in discharging him he must at the same time compliment him on his gallantry; and the Foreman of the Jury then and there started a subscription for him which came up to something near thirty pounds. Captain Forsyth ordered a chaise to take him post-haste to London for the purpose of removing Williams from a place with such horrible associations, and of getting him an appointment from the Admiralty. The people insisted on dragging the chaise out of the town with their own hands, the horses were then put to, and, amid deafening cheers, they drove off—and were never heard of again."

"Why was that?" someone asked, as the Colonel paused.

"Because it was a hoax?"

"What!" we all exclaimed. "A hoax?" We had listened breathlessly to the tale, which the Colonel certainly told admirably, the perspiration standing on his forehead as with horrible reality he personated the desperate sailor.

"Yes," he said, "a hoax. It was all a preconcerted arrangement; the Captain was merely a clever accomplice who played such parts for those of his associates in crime, who came near receiving their reward. This was probably his biggest performance; but though it answered well enough then, in these days of telegraphic communication and multiplied Navy Lists, it would be simply impossible."

THE CAVENDISHES.

WHAT'S in a name? Much every way, if its owner feels bound to act up to it. Of course I mean its *bonâ-fide* owner. I suppose the man who, disdaining to be called Bugg, gave notice that he was to be addressed as Norfolk Howard, would not trouble himself to act up to the Howard traditions. But for a real Howard, the case is very different. Howard, by the way, is one of our few great names which are older than the Wars of the Roses. In that struggle—so destructive to the nobles—most of the great families were either killed off, or so thrown out of the saddle, that they sank amid the ruck.

The destruction of the monasteries gave us our earliest nobility: Woburn and Tavistock, and the "Convent," whose garden is our London fruit market, made

the Russell family. Paget, Lord Anglesey, is Abbot, and Rector, and Vicar of Barton-on-Trent. Cavendish, who was one of Henry the Eighth's visitors to the doomed monasteries, got Welbeck and Bolton, besides much Abbey land in Hertfordshire.

The Caundishes or Cavendishes are a Suffolk family and take their name from the village near Long Metford, where, in the fine chancel with lofty clerestory, is buried Sir John of that ilk, Chief Justice of the King's Bench under Richard the Second, who was murdered at Bury by Jack Straw's people. He is remembered for his taste in beds—among them, "*un lit de worstede, un lit de saferye poudre des popinjays, and un lit de vermayl*"—and for his judgement about a lady, who claimed to be a minor, and said she would abide by his decision. He declined, wisely deciding that "no man in England has a right to pronounce whether a lady is under age or not."

The family continued loyal. Thomas, father of William the fortune-making Visitor, was Clerk of the Pipe in the Exchequer. George, the elder son, served Wolsey as gentleman-usher with a devotion which survived his downfall. George and William, in fact, are two types. The former clung to the old faith, "threw aside ambition," and was a failure. Even his "*Life of Wolsey*" was long attributed to William. He grew poorer as William grew richer. His son was a London mercer; his grandson sold the Cavendish manor; and then that branch disappears.

Not so the younger branch. Edward the Sixth gave William yet more Abbey lands. Under Mary he conformed, but did not disgorge his monastic estates. Thrice married, he got money or land with each wife; the third being Bess, the great Derbyshire heiress, daughter of Hardwick of Hardwick, and widow of Barley of Barley, who built "*Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall*," and finished Chatsworth; and who induced her husband to sell most of his other property and to buy land in her own county.

The S's on Hardwick point to her fourth marriage—with Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. She, too, kept up the family in the second son, rather slighting her eldest—one of Mary Queen of Scots' keepers and admirers—and leaving most of her property to William, who courted James the First, and paid ten thousand pounds—what a sum for that time!—to be made Earl of Devonshire. The second Earl, whose town

house was in Bishopsgate—where is Devonshire Square—is said to have died of over-eating.

William, the third Earl, was, like his father, a pupil of Hobbes the philosopher. He was a strong Royalist, though less famous than his brother Charles, who for a long time kept the King's cause in the ascendant in Lincolnshire, and was killed in a skirmish near Gainsborough, his horse having floundered into a bog. But the great Cavendish during the Civil War was a cousin, son of Charles, third son of William and Hardwick Bess. He, too, was William, which sometimes makes the history confusing. He had got Welbeck and Bolsover, but was so eager for Court patronage, that his entertainments to King James at those two places, commemorated in Ben Jonson's "Love's Welcome at Welbeck," and "Love's Welcome at Bolsover," cost nearly twenty thousand pounds.

The King made him Governor to the Prince of Wales, whom he counselled not to be too devout, "for one may be a good man and a bad king," and whom, at any rate, he made an excellent horseman.

When the war began, he lent the King ten thousand pounds, and raised a troop of knights and gentlemen. Hull, of which Charles made him Governor, "would not admit of him by no means, so he was very flat, and out of countenance." He won, however, several victories over Hotham and Fairfax, urging the latter to "follow the example of our heroic ancestors who used not to spend their time in scratching one another out of holes, but in pitched fields determined their doubts."

In 1644 he failed in keeping the Scots on their own side of the Tyne, the hard weather being much against cavalry, of which his force largely consisted. After Marston Moor he threw up his commission, replying to those who begged him to remain, "No, I will not endure the laughter of the Court!" and, transported with passion and despair at the way in which the army he had painfully raised was thrown away, he sailed to Hamburg.

Antwerp, he made his head-quarters. When Charles the Second went to Scotland to raise the army which was destroyed at Worcester, Newcastle begged him to reconcile the rival parties, Argyll and Hamilton, adding: "Get but the power into your hands, you can do hereafter as you please." He himself was trying to

of Brandenburg and transport ships from the King of Denmark, when the news of Worcester put an end to everything.

Politics being hopeless, and his contempt for Clarendon—whom he spoke of as "a most lamentable man, as fit to be a general as to be a bishop"—keeping him out of Charles's Privy Council, he went in for horsemanship, buying "barbs," setting up a riding-house, and publishing "*La Méthode et Invention Nouvelle de dresser les Chevaux*." The cost of the work was one thousand three hundred pounds, and one of the plates—by Diefenbeke—represents Newcastle adorned by a circle of admiring horses. It must have been rather a struggle to keep up his stud, for when he left England he had only ninety pounds in his pocket; and Parliament showed its sense of his importance by confiscating his estates without allowing him to pay a composition.

At the Restoration he left his wife in pledge at Antwerp. He found his estate sorely impoverished; woods cut down; houses and farms plundered; sixteen years' rent lost. He recovered the land, which had been made public property, and the King gave him back what the regicides had bought; but still he lost lands worth fifty thousand pounds, and was forced to sell others to the value of sixty thousand pounds. Altogether, his wife estimates his total loss at nine hundred and forty thousand pounds—a vast sum, when we take into account the then value of money.

Charles did not do much for him except confirm the Garter which he had given him during his exile. He took no part in politics, having enough to do to repair the ruin of his estate; to publish an English version of his "*Horsemanship*, never found out but by the thrice-noble, high, and puissant Prince William Cavendish;" and to write plays—"So silly a play as all my life I never saw," says Pepys, of the Country Captain. He had always aimed at being the English Mæcenæ. Shirley and Davenant were with him through the wars; and (Warwick complained) "such kind of witty society diverted many counsels, and lost many opportunities." The grudging Clarendon calls him "a very fine gentleman," a verdict which his wife improves on by saying, "His behaviour was easy and free, and yet hath something in it of grandeur that causes an awful respect for him."

We now come back to the main branch, represented by William, first Duke, son of

the third Earl aforesaid. When twenty years old he was one of the four who held Charles the Second's train at the Coronation. Four years later he showed great gallantry under the Duke of York in the fight with De Ruyter. Then he went in for "No Popery," working in the troubled councils of the time to exclude the Duke of York from the succession. But, though he took this new road to popularity, he prudently kept clear of all plots. People tried to implicate him in that which cost Lord William Russell his life; but Russell was his friend, and he not only witnessed in his favour on his trial, but tried to persuade him to change clothes with him in the prison.

On James's accession he showed himself quite able to hold his own. As he was attending a levee, Colonel Colepepper asked him whether this was a time and place for excluders to appear. "You lie; I am none," replied Cavendish. The Colonel gave him a box on the ear, and was knocked down for his pains; and the King fined Cavendish thirty thousand pounds for brawling in his chamber. His mother brought bonds of Charles the First's for over sixty thousand pounds, and offered them instead; but James was obdurate. Cavendish, however, escaped from prison, gave Colepepper a public caning, and was chiefly instrumental in bringing in William of Orange.

In the interval he began Chatsworth, of which Bishop Kennet says: "Though the situation be somewhat horrid"—anything savouring of wildness was disliked in those unromantic days—"this really adds to the beauty of it; the glorious house seems to be art insulting nature." Under William, honours and titles rapidly multiplied upon him. He was Lord High Steward at the Coronation, and in 1694 was made Marquis of Hartington and Duke of Devonshire. Personally, he was one of the most dissolute of men—a lady-killer of the most decided kind. "Patriotism," lady-killing, horse-racing, and cock-fighting divided his life between them.

The fourth Duke is chiefly famous for having, by marriage with the heiress of the Earl of Burlington and Cork, brought in the great Irish estates, which added so much to the family's wealth and political importance. As a Prime Minister, he was not a success, and soon had to give way to the elder Pitt. His son is chiefly famous for his two wives: Georgiana (daughter of Lord Spencer, the friend of Fox and

Sheridan), who secured Fox's election by kissing the Long Acre voters; and Elizabeth (daughter of the Earl of Bristol) the original of the stolen Gainsborough. Both these women are noteworthy. Of Georgiana, Walpole says: "She effaces all without being a beauty; her lively modesty and modest familiarity make her a phenomenon." "Let's light my pipe at your eyes," was the expression of a coal-heaver's admiration, while she was out canvassing for Fox. No wonder she was one of the Prince of Wales's "flames," succeeding Lady Melbourne in that discreditable dignity. Of Elizabeth, Gibbon, whose offered hand and heart (fancy the grim historian having a heart to offer!) she refused, says: "She's much nearer the level of a mortal than Georgiana, but a mortal for whom the wisest man would throw away two or three worlds if he had them . . . If she choose to beckon the Chancellor from his woollack, in full sight of the world, he could not resist obedience." After her husband's death she lived at Rome, patronising Canova and Thorwaldsen, and other artists, and printing "éditions de luxe," among other things, of Georgiana's poems.

Georgiana's son, the last of the direct line, had his stepmother's fondness for art. His library was a wonder; so was his collection of coins and medals, though it only sold for seven thousand pounds, less than the seventh of its cost. The malachite doors and vases at Chatsworth are memorials of his mission to Russia, when Czar Nicholas was crowned in 1826. On this mission he spent fifty thousand pounds beyond the Government allowance, so that we need not grudge him the malachite doors and the other Imperial presents. His gigantic conservatory, three hundred feet long, served as model for the original Great Exhibition of 1851. These are all the Dukes of the name. But there are plenty of smaller nobility—the Earls of Burlington, for instance, the second of whom succeeded the childless sixth Duke.

That is how big properties grow bigger; moreover, this family has always had the art of gaining and keeping money. We shall see that the philosopher (for the Cavendishes, like the Boyles, have one of that rare class) was the oldest man of his time; and Field-Marshal Lord Frederick, third son of the third Duke, though he did nothing to deserve his bâton beyond "taking the trouble to be born a Cavendish," was almost as rich as the

famous chemist. Though wholly undistinguished as a commander, he was an enthusiastic soldier, and joined Wolfe, Monckton, Keppel, in an oath not to marry till France was conquered. He kept his vow; and the ladies, so far from resenting his conduct, left him legacies—Twickenham Park estate among others—all which went to his cousin, the first Earl of Burlington.

His name, by the way, reminds us of another Lord Frederick, of whom no one can think without sorrow. His death did measureless harm to the National cause in Ireland. English eyes, bewildered with the horror of the deed, naturally failed to see that the murder could not possibly have been done by the men whose strongest interests it was to foster the growing good feeling which that murder at once put a end to. It is just as if an evil Fate, like that which is sometimes the mainspring in the old Greek tragedy, was working to destroy the hope of real union and to keep alive the bitterness which fairer laws and a mutual good understanding promised to bring about.

But politics are not in our way. It is enough to say that, like Lord Spencer, who was Viceroy when Lord Frederick was murdered, his widow, Lord Lyttelton's daughter, is now a thorough Home-Ruler. She has recognised that the wretches who killed her husband had nothing to do with that party which, rightly or wrongly, believes it can see in Home-Rule the way to a true instead of a dead Union. So much for the titled Cavendishes. Two untitled members of the family deserve a word of notice.

Thomas Cavendish, pirate and circumnavigator, was not a credit to his name or country. He was an offshoot of the old stock, born at Grimston Hall, near Harwich; and, having squandered his fortune, he determined to repair it by joining Raleigh in his first plantation of Virginia (1585). Raleigh, though, like all the Tudor "worthies," was servile, and self-seeking, and Machiavelian in policy, had high aims and noble aspirations. Cavendish's aims were limited to buccaneering; and the way he, Grenville, and others treated the natives of what is now North Carolina, should shut the mouth of those who cry out against Spanish cruelty. As soon as he got home he planned an expedition on his own account, and sailed in July, 1586, from Plymouth with three ships and one hundred and twenty-three men. After

trying to burn the town of Sierra Leone, he got down to the Straits of Magellan through which he wound his way in mid-winter, stopping at King Philip's City only long enough to dig out and carry off the cannon which the poor Spaniards had buried when famine forced them to abandon the place. The place was not inviting, "for the noisome stench and vile savour wherewith it was infected through the contagion of the Spaniards' pined and dead carcases." He saw twenty-three of these starvelings (two women), who were trying to make their way by land to the River Plate. Cavendish himself fared badly enough in that wretchedest of all countries. He was six weeks in getting through, "and for quite a month we fed almost altogether on mussels, limpets, and birds, seeking for them every day as the fowls of the air do, in continual rainy weather." One starving Spaniard he rescued; but when the man was put ashore near Valparaiso to parley with a reconnoitring party, he made off and gave the alarm. Cavendish, therefore, sailed northward, burning what barques he met, and in one instance "tormenting a prisoner with his thumbs in a wrench," partly by way of warning a captured pilot to be "reasonable." By May he had reached the Chincha Isles, where he captured three big merchant ships, one worth twenty thousand pounds, burning all the goods which he could not stow on his own vessels.

On Puma Isle, in the Gulf of Guayaquil, lived "the great cacique, with his Spanish wife, and his palace chambers decorated with hangings of Cordovan leather, gilded all over, and painted very rare and rich," a successful attempt, it would seem, at that fusion of races, which for the Anglo-Saxon seems impossible. Alas! the foolish natives made a sortie to try to save a big ship lying at anchor; and in revenge for this their town was burned, palace and all. Burning and spoiling he reached Cape St. Lucas, in Lower California, and beat up and down for a month till the great Santa Anna, from the Philippines to Acapulco, came in sight. Her he captured after a six hours' fight, and took from her twenty-two thousand gold pesos, besides eighty tons—all he could carry away—of her six hundred tons of very rich merchandise. He had only two ships, having sunk the smallest for lack of hands; however, he found room for two Japanese and three Manila boys, and a Portuguese who gave him the map of China, described in Hakluyt. He also took

the Philippines' pilot, whom he afterwards hanged for trying to run him into Manila. Of his two remaining ships, the "Desire" and "Content," the latter parted company when she had watched the "Santa Anna" and her five hundred and twenty tons of richest wares burnt to the water's edge, and was never heard of after. The "Desire" wandered about the Moluccas, and by mid-March sighted the Cape of Good Hope. On June 8 he discovered St. Helena; and, reaching the Lizard early in September, heard of the destruction of the Armada. Thence, after a four days' storm, "like wearied men, through the power of the Almighty, we got into Plymouth." And so completed the second English voyage round the globe, celebrated in "A Ballad of Master Cavendish's Voyage, who by travel encompassed the Globe of the World, arriving in England with abundance of treasure," and other songs of which the names only survive. This was in 1588; before 1591 Cavendish had squandered all his money "in gallantry and following the Court"—the Queen received him at Greenwich—and was planning another expedition. In this he wholly failed; he started too late—in August instead of July; his attack on Santos, in Brazil, was feeble; and, after again wintering in the Straits, he wanted to sail away home by way of the Cape of Good Hope. "You can't do that with so feeble a crew," said Davis of Davis's Straits, his second in command. "Well, then, I'll return to Santos and have another try," replied the navigator, who had evidently lost nerve through the hardships of the winter. He got back to the coast of Brazil, where Davis and he parted company, and he died of a broken heart just off St. Helena, crying out, most unjustly, that Davis had deserted him. A year after his death, Davis got to Berehaven, in Iceland, "with a remnant of fifteen, so feeble that they could not take in or heave out a sail."

Henry Cavendish, the scientist, born in 1731, was son of the second Duke of Devonshire's third son, Charles. He was a scientist and nothing else, living like a hermit, never marrying, and letting his income accumulate till, at his death, it reached nearly a million and a quarter. But he discovered the composition of water: "It consists of dephlogisticated air" (oxygen, we say), and "phlogiston" (hydrogen). He discovered nitric acid, which he called phlogisticated air; and he settled by experiment the exact composition of atmospheric air.

Watt was experimenting on the same subjects at the same time, and so was Dr. Priestley; and, as Cavendish was strangely uncommunicative, while they were in constant correspondence with Black, Lavoisier, Laplace, and others, he very nearly lost the credit of his discoveries.

He then experimented on latent heat, but never published the results for fear of clashing with Black, who had made heat his speciality. In electricity, too, he anticipated several modern discoveries; and he improved on the old method of determining the earth's density.

His habits were eccentric. He never received company, though he allowed his friends full use of his large library. Every day he left a note on the hall table of his house on Clapham Common, saying what he would like for dinner. He was so morbidly shy that he could not bear even to look at cook or housemaids. Almost his only visits were to the meetings of the Royal Society and to Sir J. Banks's at-home. Lord Brougham met him at the former, and speaks of "the shrill cry that he uttered as he shuffled quickly from room to room, annoyed if looked at, but sometimes approaching to hear what was passing among others. His walk was quick and uneasy. He probably uttered fewer words in his life than any man who ever lived to fourscore, not excepting the monks of La Trappe."

Warming up when science was the question, he was dead to everything else. No one ever heard him express himself warmly on any question of religion or politics. He had, in fact, no human sympathy; widely differing in this from our other noble scientist, Robert Boyle, who, when a director of the East India Company, insisted that they should try to spread Christianity in their settlements; and who, besides getting the Gospels and Acts translated into Malay, had "Grotius de Veritate Christianæ Religionæ" translated into Arabic for distribution among the Mussulmans. Boyle did more: he gave largely to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, and bequeathed seven hundred pounds towards printing the Bible in Irish; a work which, had it been done in time, would have made the Irish as good Protestants as the Welsh are.

A far finer man this than Cavendish, whose many discoveries are vitiated by his belief in "a latent principle called phlogiston, which accounted for the phenomena of combustion," and which, of course, as he

partly saw by-and-by, was identical with hydrogen gas. Besides investigating hydrogen, Cavendish wrote much about the properties of "fixed air" (carbonic acid). He analysed the water of many London pumps, beginning with Rathbone Place, and showed that the earthy matters were held in solution by this fixed air, and that boiling would, therefore, at once, get rid of them.

This is something practical, and has done more good to "the public" than all the glories of the great Whig house. But still it is a grand thing for a nation to have great houses, whether Whig or Tory; and the fact that they survived the French Revolution, is a proof not only of English Conservatism, but also that the relations between the classes are closer in England than they were in old France at any rate.

"CLOSER THAN A BROTHER."

By G. B. STUART.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XII. GOOD-BYE.

"Are there any more letters for the post-bag, sir?"

"Yes; stop a minute, Dennis; it is only a note, and you can wait and take it."

John Bulteel had been trying to write this note all the afternoon; now, with the butler standing respectfully waiting, his fingers moved mechanically, almost independently of the brain that had been framing such elaborate sentences for the composition of this very letter.

What they wrote was simple enough:

"Bulteel, November twenty-fifth.

"MY DEAR TWISDEN,—If you can run down here on Friday afternoon, you will do me a great kindness. I have some papers which I wish you to take charge of, and I am sure May will be glad to see you. The cart will meet the usual train at Barkham to-morrow afternoon, and you had better prepare to stay a few days.

"Yours ever,

"J. BULTEEL."

John turned the signet ring on his little finger with nice precision on to the red sealing-wax, directed the envelope to Arthur's rooms in Bury Street, and tossed it over to Dennis:

"That is all, Dennis." Then, as the old man was leaving the library, he called after him carelessly—"You might bring

that pistol-case in from the gun-room, and the new rifle. I want to look them over. There's no fire in the gun-room, I suppose?"

"No, sir." Dennis stopped to answer the question; then, with the freedom of an old servant: "I beg your pardon, sir, but, if I might suggest, don't get looking over fire-arms by candle-light. It's a thing I've heard your father say a dozen times was most dangerous"—Dennis had no personal acquaintance with guns, and held them all to be infernal machines in disguise—"and Simmonds has had that rifle down and cleaned it thoroughly not three days ago."

"All right, Dennis; mind your own business, and bring me the pistols as I told you. Whoever said I was going to look them over by candle-light except you yourself? By-the-bye, don't forget to let George know that I expect Mr. Twisden by the usual train to-morrow afternoon. He had better take the cart over to Barkham, as I mayn't be able to go myself."

"Yes, sir; that will be to-morrow afternoon, sir?" Dennis repeated, surprised at the earliness of the order.

"Yes, don't let there be any mistake. I may be out to-morrow, or otherwise engaged, so I give you the order in good time."

"Very well, sir."

May was playing odds and ends of old tunes to herself, sitting in the boudoir after dinner. The boudoir had been rebuilt, and was essentially May's own room, just as the library at the other end of the house was her brother's.

"Play me 'Home, Sweet Home,' said John, coming in quietly and standing behind her as she sat.

It was John's favourite tune; just the air itself without any variations. "Don't trouble to play the bit which sounds as if you were trying to get away from home as hard as ever you could and someone was dragging you back by the hair," he had said once, and May knew now when he asked for it exactly what to give: the melody once or twice through, sometimes with chords, sometimes with a plaintive, open accompaniment.

"Thank you, that is just what I like."

"After Christmas we must go up to town for a little, John, and see some sights and hear some music; you ought to hear Patti sing that."

May did not sing.

"I should not like it any better."

"I never knew such a prejudiced old

creature as you are ! Don't let anyone else hear you say such a thing, or they will think I have a boor for a brother !"

"Perhaps you have !"

"You know I don't think so, and I ought to know best !"

"We weren't very good friends at first, May."

"That was my fault," May answered, hanging her head a little; her brother still stood behind her and his hands rested on her shoulders. "I was arrogant and spoilt, and I was angry with you because you were not what I expected. I had built up an imaginary brother out of a few childish recollections and a lot of girl's impossible imaginings: of the real causes which go to the making of a man's character, I know absolutely nothing. Do you know, John, if you had been the man I made you in my mind, I should have detested you in a week ! And instead of that, and in spite of all our quarrellings, you have forced me into——"

"Liking me a little !"

"Loving you with all my might !"

"Ah !" It might have been amusement at her confession, or triumph perhaps: then John bent down and kissed her quickly on both her eyes.

"How you startled me !" she said, jumping up and rubbing them hastily; perhaps there had been tears in them. "You do everything different from the rest of the world ! You even kiss people topsyturvy ! That comes of fifteen years in Australia, I suppose, where everything must be upside down !"

"Well, give me an English kiss, now, straightforward; it is time you were in bed. Do you know that Arthur is coming down to-morrow !"

"No. Is he ? What for !"

"To take over some important papers, and to stay a few days as well. He is a good fellow, May. I hope you like him and trust him as much as I do !"

"Oh yes, we are great friends." May was gathering up her music and answered carelessly.

"I am glad of that; he is to be depended on for advice or help if ever you want it."

"I shouldn't want it, John, as long as I had you."

"No, of course not; not as long as you had me. But Arthur is a much better fellow than I am ! Good-bye, May."

"Good-night, John, I suppose you mean !"

Alone in the library. There lay the

pistols upon the writing-table, the rifle across the arms of a big chair; John, looked at them carefully, they were all unloaded. Then he unlocked a table-drawer, and brought out the long, blue envelope, which he had carried down from town that morning; he addressed it to Arthur Twisden, Esq., and slipped it under the cover of the blotting-book. The big house was very still, and outside a soft rain was falling, which seemed to have hushed every other sound. John Bulteel sat and thought; it is wonderful how the mind will travel over time and space in the supreme moment of joy or pain. He was back on Wambo again, smoking his evening pipe outside the hut with his partner beside him. "You are in a deuce of a hurry to get rid of me," someone said. Then, in a flash, he was standing beside the water-hole, looking down on the dead face of the man who had been closer to him than a brother, he remembered, thinking "it is all over, then," as Messenger poked his warm muzzle into his hand, looking down anxiously, too, on the dead master. And now, what is this ? A girl with ruffled yellow hair, and angry, tearful eyes; a girl, whose face is strange and yet familiar; whose voice has a peremptory ring in it, that brings distant Queensland into every-day English life ! And presently her arms are round his neck, and her cheek is laid against his; his heart beats as if it would suffocate him; but her white breast is unmoved by any emotion beyond that of gratitude—a cold, feeble spark, beside the raging, restless passion of his reckless love ! And so on through the different scenes of his nine months in England; sometimes, he is out in the fields—his own fields—or across the park on "Snowstorm," man and beast struggling for the mastery; or pacing the terrace which looks down upon a wealth of summer roses, or listening to "Home, Sweet Home" on the verandah in the twilight; but the girl's face is always there, now angry, now penitent, turned away in irritation, or held up to him for forgiveness. And he can picture the face now, lying with white eyelids closed, and with yellow hair unbound upon the pillow; sleeping as young and innocent people sleep in the certainty of a happy awakening. He has risen, and loaded one of the pistols; with careful hands he has brought out oil-bottles and leathers from a cupboard and disposed them about the table, to give the appearance of accident, so as to rob to-morrow's disclosure of its shame; then he

takes something from his pocket-book and kisses it again and again, a little bunch of dead violets, tied with a faded silk.

Ah! that face upon the pillow; does it stir? Does it turn with a sigh? Will its awakening be as joyful, as calm as heretofore, or will it be aroused to horror, and despair, and blood?

With a groan that shook all his strong frame, he laid the pistol down again; it was harder to relinquish his intention than to carry it out, but he could not face the thought of May's awakening.

"I must wait until she is away, out of the house," he said, "there must be no shock to her; I had not thought of that!"

And the pistol lay on the table, loaded and ready to pay the reckoning of this nine months' mistake!

CHAPTER XIII. AFTERWARDS.

"COULD someone speak to Mrs. Haddington on business?"

Certainly! Mrs. Haddington was entertaining her step-daughter at five o'clock tea, on Friday afternoon, the day after her return from her short honeymoon. She was rather pleased than otherwise to show May how much she was already in request in her new sphere, and fluttered away, begging May to make herself quite at home, and pour out tea for Charles if he came in—a great sign of favour.

It was Arthur Twisden who was waiting in the Vicar's study.

"Good Heavens, Arthur! what is it?" Mrs. Haddington almost screamed, as she caught sight of his face.

"Bad news, Mrs. Haddington. Can you take it quietly and make no sound for May's sake?"

"Yes, yes; is it my husband?"

"No; it is Bulteel."

"What! Is he hurt?"

"He is dead; shot through the heart!"

"Shot! Oh, Arthur, who did it?"

"An accident. He had out some guns to clean, apparently, after lunch to-day, when May had left to come down to you. Dennis saw him about two o'clock, and they had some joke together about the pistols. Dennis said he hoped they were all unloaded; he had been too nervous to look close at them. Then the servants went to their dinner, and no one saw him again alive. Someone went into the library at four, and found him lying back in his chair quite dead. The pistol was in his hand, and his arm lay on the table in

front of him—the bullet right through his heart. He must have held it clumsily, pointing towards himself, without noticing that it was charged. They had sent for Morton, and he was there when I arrived just now; but he said he must have been several hours dead. Probably it happened just after the men went to dinner. It seemed providential that May was here, and that I had arrived to do some special business with poor Bulteel. You must manage to break it to her, Mrs. Haddington, and keep her here for the present. I am afraid it is a bad job I am giving you; but it is fortunate that he and May have never been so much to each other as ordinary brothers and sisters! I must get back to Bulteel at once."

"Mr. Haddington wants—— Gracious, Arthur, what brings you here?"

It was May standing at the study door. Then they told her.

After John Bulteel's funeral, Messrs. Taper and Twisden produced the will which their deceased client had left under cover to Arthur Twisden, and which he had handed immediately to the senior partners of the firm. It was a curious will, the lawyers thought, and executed in a curious manner by a perfect stranger; but even the least original among us behave oddly as regards our testamentary arrangements; and John Bulteel had always been stranger than other men. Besides, there was perhaps a reason in this case for the execution of the will by an unknown solicitor; for the testator, leaving Bulteel and all its belongings in land and money to his only sister, bequeathed the sum of seven thousand pounds to his friend, Arthur Twisden, "in memory of their recent conversation at the Grafton Club." This same seven thousand pounds being the sum which John had received from Queenaland after the sale of Wambo.

"By George!" cried Arthur, when he read the bequest, "what a generous fellow he was! He had set his heart on my marrying May, and he was determined to make it possible for me in the most gentlemanlike manner. But to be sure, if he hadn't died in this terrible sudden way, the legacy would not have helped me much. Perhaps he felt seedy on that night he dined with me in town—why, it was only Wednesday last!—and had a kind of prevision of death. Poor fellow! and poor May! She takes it more to heart than I expected."

One of the letters which fell into May's hands about this time, was an ill-written grimy scrawl from one George Strutt, who wrote to Mr. Bulteel, in ignorance of the catastrophe, informing him of his return to England from Australia, and asking for employment or a recommendation.

"I should rather like to see him, Arthur," May said. Arthur had been May's right hand, and her word was his law; but he demurred a little at this.

"Do you think you are fit for it, May?"

"I should like it. You know I knew so little of his life all those long years, and I should like to see someone who had known him well, to whom, I am sure he has been kind."

So George Strutt was fetched, and came, looking thoroughly uncomfortable, into the presence of his old master's sister, who rose up with a white face that smiled sadly, and held out her hand. "You were the overseer, I know; my dear brother has mentioned you to me once or twice. I think it would have given him a great pleasure to have seen you again—he loved everything connected with Wambo!"

"Yes, ma'am. I beg pardon, miss I should say: he and Mr. Bell was very close chums—and better masters no man would ever need to look for. To think of their both being cut off so sudden like, within the year!—within the year!" Strutt repeated, feeling that he did not quite know what to say, and clinging to what seemed a safe and appropriate phrase.

"I thought perhaps you would be able to tell me something of their life there, Strutt?"

"Yes, miss; but there isn't much to tell. Sheep-farming in Queensland is rough work for master and man, and there ain't much change in it, year out, year in. Your poor brother, miss, and Mr. Bell worked just as hard as the men they employed; and I'm sure, if he'd been here to speak for me, he'd have told you that I was a sober, responsible man, as could be recommended to any position of trust; but I'm tired of backwoods life, that's the truth, and wanted to come home and settle, same as Mr. Bulteel did himself, after poor Mr. Bell's murder."

"They were very much attached to each other, were they not?"

"Like brothers born, miss, or even closer, for I've known brothers that shouldn't bear the name! Mr. Bell was like a dog, following Mr. Bulteel about,

and when Mr. Bulteel was a bit high with the men, I've known Mr. Bell speak to them afterwards about it and make it all square; he used to say as how the boss came of an old family, and it was in his blood to order people about, which is what put men's backs up a bit in Australia! They fell out sometimes, as the best friends will, and I've seen Mr. Bulteel's black eyes flash up a sudden, as if he couldn't keep back his temper; but he never laid a hand on Bell, and I believe if he had a done so, Bell would have taken it from him without a word back, he loved him so!"

"I will do what I can to get you a situation," May said, as she dismissed George Strutt; but to Arthur she afterwards remarked: "I don't believe he knew dear John as well as he pretended. He spoke of him as having black eyes, and you know how blue they were."

May Bulteel married Arthur Twisden about a year after her brother's death; and the Twisden - Bulteeles and their children now reign in the old home. May is devoted to her husband, and he loves her "with all his heart," as he once told John Bulteel. If his heart has been less developed than his head, he is scarcely to blame; it is rather the result of our modern system of education, which puts public-school life and competitive examinations, with a life about town to follow, in place of home associations.

If May sometimes wonders that her husband fails to understand all her mind, she recalls how once before she had been mistaken in trying to gauge a man's character with the plummet of a girl's restricted experience.

And, perhaps, in some "land very far off" John Bell and John Bulteel have met again!

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WHEN Tilly had parted from John Temple, she sought out her chaperon and announced her intention of going home at once; hence the gall and wormwood that embittered Fred's spirit.

She looked quite ill enough to justify the decision and to silence his protestations; but he felt defrauded none the less. It was still quite early when she reached Yarrow House, and lights were twinkling from all the windows. The maid who was told off specially to wait on her looked surprised to see her; but Tilly checked her exclamations.

"I have a headache, Jane"—it was quite true now—"don't disturb anyone. I am going to my room, and I shall not want you to-night."

"Won't you let me help you, miss?" said Jane, who was proud of her special service, and loved the rich abundance of Tilly's finery. "At least, you'll let me fold your gown, miss?"

Tilly declined both proposals.

"Is my uncle alone?"

She turned to ask the question in a low voice.

"Yes, miss; leastways, there's only Mr. Behrens with him."

Mr. Behrens, apparently, counted in Jane's thoughts as nobody. He had not assumed a place of great importance in Tilly's mind either, until to-night; but now her heart sank with a premonition of dread as she heard of his presence in the house. John had not presented any very clear

picture to her mind of the harm he might work; but in her depressed mood it was easy enough to hopeless disaster.

All the subduing experiences of the day gathered themselves up into a haunting fear: trouble, disappointment, and sorrow to the uncle who was the chief figure in her little world were worse than any grief which might befall herself; and she was beginning to realise faintly that the future might not offer her unmixed delight.

She paced her darkened room, and listened furtively for the visitor's departing steps. All the familiar, everyday sounds of the house seemed intensified as they reached her: the commercial traveller's inadequate but cheerful whistle, as he plunged down to his on the lower floor; Mrs. Drew's full, contented laugh at some mild pleasantries presented for her amusement by her husband; the mellow murmur of Mr. Sherrington's voice in dictation in the room above—she heard all these; but she waited long in vain for the sound her ear was bent on catching. At last it came: the soft shutting of the door; the quiet, deliberate tread—the tread of a man who knew his mind, and was not lightly to be betrayed into haste or flurry. If Tilly had quitted her room a moment earlier, and had met him in the corridor, she would have seen a quiet and musing smile upon his face which might have reassured her by its innocence; but she had no mind to meet him.

When all was silent, she crept almost stealthily to the door of the sitting-room, where her uncle was, and turned the handle noiselessly, still fearing to be heard or intercepted by the other boarders.

Mr. Burton was walking up and down in a methodical jog-trot that bespoke some excitement on his part.

The room was crowded with useless superfluities which had been bought simply that some money might be spent. He had pushed such of these as hindered his progress out of the way, and they had the effect of holding aloof and withdrawing their grace as if to emphasise his rugged homeliness. His back was towards her when Tilly opened the door. She had travelled such a long way towards dread, that it was with a start of surprise she noticed the new alertness of his walk. When he turned, his face was suffused with a red flush of triumph; and in his eyes—those clear eyes, which seemed so shrewd, and were but shining windows to a dull soul—there was a look of grasped achievement.

"Well, Tilly, lass," he said, as if it did not surprise him to see her there. He really did not know how early it yet was. "Well, my lass, come and give me a kiss."

She went forward and obeyed the demand almost mechanically; but her mind was working clearly enough. She was wondering whether John's warning had come too late, and, if so, in what manner the crisis was to be met.

He kissed her twice.

"There," he said, releasing her with a laugh, "that's one for Tilly Burton as she is, and one for Tilly something else as she will be."

"I am never going to be anything but what I am," she said almost incoherently, catching at any words in her desire to gain time to think how she ought to begin.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed; "somebody else will have a word to say about that. Wait a bit, an' we'll see."

"I want no change," she protested, putting an arm about his neck, "unless it is a change backwards. I should like the old days to come again."

"Ah," he said with a kind of gentleness under his brusqueness, "there's no changing back; we must go forret; but we'll go forret together; you an' me, an' the lad. We'll go forret till there's nobody a step ahead of us, an' then we'll stop."

"Uncle Bob," she said, taking a new resolution, "you used to tell me things, even when I was very little and stupider than I am now; you used to confide in me. You used to tell me what you meant to do when the days that have come were all in the distance." She gave half a sigh, perhaps for those old days.

"She's not forgotten her wheedlin' ways," he said with a smile of rich delight, ap-

parently addressing a supercilious Japanese lady, fanning herself on a screen. "She had a tongue that could wile a bird from a tree."

"You speak in the past tense; don't be so rude as to tell me I've lost it," she said, making a brave attempt at gaiety. "I've been used to having pretty things said to me lately, and I couldn't stand a snub!"

"What will she be at now?" he said, as if he were trying to draw help from the disdainful lady with the fan. He had thrown himself heavily on one of the chairs which had been displaced by his walk; a fantastic seat, mounted in black Indian carved work, over which a bit of yellow damask had been flung. She slid down to the floor beside him, heedless of the sharp fretwork that bruised her bare, round arm.

"I want you," she said, "to confide in me again. I am jealous of my old place, dear. If you have plans and hopes now—as you had then—will you not share them with me still?"

"Well, well," he said, "sometimes I've had it on the tip of my tongue to tell you, and then I have said to myself—bide a wee, an' it'll be a bigger surprise for her and her lad."

"I'd rather take the surprise in little bits," she said, ignoring Fred's share in it; "it wouldn't be such a shock."

He laughed again, ready, indeed, to laugh at anything in the lightness of his humour.

"I think ye'll be able—both the two of ye—to bear it. The lad will, anyway," he added with what—if it were at all his habit—might even be sarcasm.

"Shall I guess a little as I used to do?" she said. "I needn't guess that you want to be richer than you are, for you have told me that, you immoderate man; so I must guess how the new riches are to come. Of course they are to come from the City; that's the El Dorado where all the lost and buried treasures are hidden; but I've a particular bit of the City in my mind. I think it is called the Stock Exchange. Have you ever heard of such a place?"

"She's sharp," he said admiringly, nodding towards the screen, "she's as sharp as a gled."

"I suppose I may take that for an admission," she said, keeping up her little air of gaiety with an effort. "I'm hot, as we used to say in that game we played as children. The Exchange is a very wonderful and most mysterious place, as I imagine it. It is a show, like a huge penny show at a fair, only much finer. The showman

stands outside, and beats a drum, and rings a bell, and says : "Come inside, ladies and gentlemen, and you shall see how fortunes are made at a stroke, without any risk or trouble at all. Everybody who enters here gets a prize ; there isn't a single blank."

"Well," he said in his huge admiration of her cleverness, "it beats all ! Behrens has been telling you——"

"No, he hasn't. He doesn't confide in me any more than you." She took his big, rough hand in her own.

"The prizes," she went on, "are very tempting indeed. Sometimes, it is a silver mine——"

"No, no," he shook his head. "You don't catch an old mining hand with a bait like that."

"Or a plan to light London with electricity."

"Gas is good enough for me."

"Well," she said, for she knew the limits of her knowledge, "it matters very little what it is. The people believe, and they go in as fast as ever they can, jostling and pushing each other in their haste to see the wonders within ; and some few of them, who struggle and push better than others, and care little how they hurt their neighbours in their anxiety to get to the front, may indeed get a prize ; but most of them—and these the simplest and the best—get nothing at all, and lose all they already have, and are poor, and bruised, and embittered all the rest of their lives."

"No, no, my woman," he said, with a hint of returning doggedness, as she ended her little parable. "You're cold now ; you're wrong there. It's the many that win ; and the few—fools mostly—who meddle with what they don't understand, who get their fingers burnt. It's all in the understanding," he went on. "If you're willing to take glitter for gold, you've nobody but yourself to blame if it turns out trash in your hands. You've got to use your eyes and your wits, and you're safe enough."

He had eyes, if he knew how to use them ; but his shrewdness, pitted against the razor-like acuteness of Behrens' trained and subtle mind—what chance had it ?

Tilly laid her cheek against the rough hand that held her own.

"Never you fear, little lass," he said cheerfully, in answer to the mute caress. "I'll come out all right. It's a safe thing I'm going in for—safe and sound as the Bank itself. You'll never guess what it is."

"No," she acquiesced ; "I'll never guess."

"It's nothing to do with silver mines, or diamonds," he said ; "and it's nothing to do with mineral oil, nor yet with coal. You dig in the dark when you set yourself to hew out the bowels of the earth ; an' it's ten to one you get nothing but dirt for your pains. But there's treasures in the sea lying ready for any man who has the sense to put his hand in and draw them out."

"In the sea ?"

"Ay, in the sea. There's money in the sea—millions of it. It's a bank you may draw on with never a fear of its stopping payment. What do you think of this ?" he said, with a note of triumph, drawing an oblong paper from the breast-pocket of his coat, and holding it down till it was on a level with her eyes :

"THE ANGLO-NORSO HERRING, OIL, AND GUANO COMPANY, LIMITED," she read, in a wondering voice.

"Capital, £100,000,

"In 20,000 Shares of £5 each,

"Payable as follows :"

She paused while she ran her eye greedily down the list of directors. His name was not there. In her relief at this certainty the humorous side of the matter seemed to strike her.

"Herrings !" she repeated, and she laughed half hysterically. To be weighed down with dread of unknown disaster, and then to be pulled up short like this ! A silver or a diamond mine would have carried a breathless hazard in its very sound, but the plebeian herring had safety in every letter of it.

"Herrings !" he echoed, but with a jubilant ring in his laugh. "Everybody eats them ; and they're in such a precious hurry to be eaten that they can't multiply fast enough. If you lived on nothing else you couldn't come to an end of them. But what you can't cure for eating you can make into oil, and what you don't want to make into oil you can turn into manure ; so it's a safe thing all round—no waste, and no loss anywhere. It's all here : you read it out, my lass."

She took the paper obediently, and travelled through all its triumphant and convincing statistics. The directors had names that carried respectability, and even aristocracy, in their very spelling ; the bankers were towers of strength ; the solicitors, names to swear by ; and the auditor and the secretary were irreproachable.

It looked, as he said it was, a safe, honourable, and easy road to fortune : and

if anyone who had toiled through the calculations, and had weighed the diminutive costs, and mastered the amazing profits, still had about him a shred of doubt, he was bereft of it by the overwhelming testimony of the appendix to the virtues of the guano and the oil.

Uncle Bob would not spare Tilly a word of small, or large, print; he kept time with a finger on her shoulder as she read, emphasising the points that smote with relish on his ear.

"Ten tons of fish equal to fifty-six of farm-yard manure!" he repeated. "Seventy thousand tons of offal annually from the curing!" He revelled in the details as if they were something good to eat.

In turning over the papers she noticed one that announced itself as a "Form of Application for Shares," and she saw that it yet remained unsigned. There was a feeling of relief which she hardly knew whether or not to appropriate in its blank aspect. He might have signed another copy, or his signature might not be necessary at all. She was too inexperienced to feel any certainty.

"Have you just heard of this company?" she asked.

"Just to-night. You see you've not been long kept in the dark."

"Oh! then you haven't taken any shares in it yet?"

"It won't run away before to-morrow," he nodded at her reassuringly, as if in answer to an unexpressed fear of hers. "As I'll be the largest buyer of the lot, I guess they'll wait for me."

"It was stupid of me to ask that," she said, hiding her flushed cheek; she hated the disingenuous part she felt herself to be playing, the traps she was setting to surprise his confidence. If she could but have openly warned or entreated him!

"You are waiting till your lawyer looks into all those piles of figures, aren't you?"

"No," he said a trifle sharply, "what for should I do that? There's the paper—it's plain enough, and I've Behrens's word to back it. Behrens is an honourable man."

"Then," she said with a last effort, "he is sure to want you to have it looked into, for his own sake. He will want you to feel as confident as he is. You wouldn't sell him a horse that he hadn't seen——"

"I've seen a herring, and one herring's pretty much like another, I guess," he said ponderously.

That was too much for her in her over-

strained mood, and she laughed again because she felt so near to tears, and he laughed with her joyously, as if at a good joke.

"Go to bed, little lass," he said, "what do you know about it? Don't you bother your head. I tell you it will all come out right enough. Go and dream that you've got the spending of the money when it's made—that's all you'll have to do."

She rose because she felt that she had used her last argument. She understood the business so little that she was hopeless of finding any weak points in it for her attack. The weak points were no doubt there, but she had no skill to see them.

Something perhaps of weary wistfulness in her as she rose to bid him good-night, touched him to a sudden tenderness.

"You know that I love you, my girl!" he said with unwonted effusiveness.

"Oh, I know it, I know it," she said vehemently. Then in a flash she saw her chance and grasped it. "You love me enough to do two things—two very little things for me, don't you?"

"What may they be?" he asked with the caution of his race.

"Only that you'll go with me to Mrs. Popham's to-morrow night, and that you'll put off taking shares in this company till the day after to-morrow. It's just one day's delay," she urged, anticipating his refusal, "and I want you to-morrow. I want you one day all to myself, as if the old times were back again. I never have you now. Before the new riches come, let us be as we used to be for once: ah, I'm so afraid that they'll come between us and keep us apart!"

He had been unwilling at first, but he could not resist this pleading.

"Well," he said, "I suppose the Herring Company won't run off; it can bide a day if it must, though I see no sense in it. It wouldn't take me five minutes to settle all the business I've got to do."

"But I want it to be a day without any business at all. I want it to be all my own."

"Well," he said again; but the monosyllable had a fainter remonstrance, and he yielded finally at her whispered thanks.

John had said she might urge delay. Would a day's respite do any good? Her ignorance gave her no help; but it was all she could do.

She sat still later to write a hasty little note to her cousin.

"It is an Anglo-Swedish Fish Company,"

she said. "I have found that out. He believes in it; he has set his heart on being the largest shareholder in it. I'm afraid I can't prevent it, and I have only gained a single day's delay.

"If it were only the money I shouldn't mind; but he will lose his faith in friendship, and that hurts. Oh! I wish I could help it!

"TILLY."

SKETCHES IN ANGLESEY.

WHEN George Borrow made his sturdy tour of wild Wales in 1854, strangers were rare in Anglesey. "I can't conceive how any person, either gentle or simple, could have any business in Anglesey, save that business was pigs or cattle." So said Mr. Bos, the cattle-dealer, when, at the little inn of Pentraeth Coch, he was confronted by the enigmatical East Anglian, who could talk Welsh, and was as familiar with Welsh poetry as with his own native Norfolk dumplings. "Pig jobbing's your trade, I am certain, or you would never have gone to Llanfair." Borrow had, as a matter of fact, gone to Llanfair to find the house of a poet; but he bore the reference to pigs with a spirit of true Saxon self-control.

Even in Borrow's time, however, steamers brought visitors from Liverpool to Beaumaris, and other visitors crossed to the island by Telford's wonderful bridge, though probably their stay was of the briefest, and their curiosity easily appeased. But the strangers seldom went far from the capital. They were content with the beauties that lay before them. The three hundred miles west, north-west, and south-west of them remained a "terra incognita" to them. They had been given to understand that the natives were incredibly ignorant of English; that their houses were unpleasant, ill-smelling little dens, quite unfit for the reception of civilised Saxons; that the person who could not stomach bread and butter and butter-milk day after day would have to take his chance of starvation in Anglesey; that the island swarmed with bulls, black and impatient, and unused to the sight of strangers; and that, moreover, there was really nothing worth seeing in the place after all.

"The Island of Mona is an arid and stony land, rough and unpleasant in its appearance, though incomparably more fertile in corn than any other

part of Wales." So said the old chroniclers; and, of course, they were to be believed. Hence people left Anglesey to itself. It was all very well in the days of the Druids: there were then plenty of woods, and with their sacrifices, incantations, mistletoe revels, and all the other picturesque frolics and ceremonies of an archaic epoch, these early inhabitants of the island doubtless enjoyed themselves. But the trees are now gone for the most part, and the extraordinary number of churches which stand towards Anglesey as the modern substitutes for its groves and cromlechs, are not attractive. And so most people, who saw anything of northern and western Anglesey, saw it from the decks of transatlantic steamers.

Nowadays it is somewhat different. During the summer months, gentlemen with quiet tastes and large families troop into Anglesey, and get themselves domiciled in the sequestered inns or farm-houses, which dot the eastern coast-line. They do this year after year, until their sons are able to follow their example. The sands of the eastern bays are superb. The air is pure as sea-air always is, and bracing withal. There is good fishing. It is no longer difficult to hold communication with a native. The little boys of Anglesey find it to their profit to learn English. Where the mother of the family will mutter a "Dim Saesneg" in response to a stranger's enquiry, the offspring will offer a brisk "yes, indeed, sir. Saesneg, little," and with an intelligent ear will listen to words, the meaning of which he does not yet understand, until the stranger is tired of playing schoolmaster at so little cost to the scholar, and so little profit to himself. The roads of Anglesey, moreover, are excellent, so that occasionally a bicyclist is tempted to run through the land. But a bicyclist is notoriously unob-servant of any except the topographical characteristics of a country. The manners, habits, hopes, and anxieties of a people are of less importance to him than the state of the roads. Even the bicyclists, however, in common with the family parties, will see little or nothing of the most curious sections of Anglesey. The rocks of the north-west, and the remarkable sands which are slowly devastating the south-west of the island, are obstacles to all save pedestrians.

In olden days Anglesey was not Anglesey but Ynys Dwyall (The Shady Island); Ynys y Cêdeirn (The Island of the Mighty);

Ynys Bôn, Fôn, or Môn (Bôn meaning a stem or base, and Môn an extremity). From the last of these, Mona readily proceeded; and in its significance of a portion of land distant from the mainland, the same word has naturally migrated to the Isle of Man, where it is still retained. But, when the Saxons set foot on the island, with their stalwart disregard for vested names as for vested rights they immediately changed the name to Anglesey (Angles' Ynys—the Isle of the Angles). It had, in truth, grown out of its earlier name. Its oaks had been sadly thinned by Pagan Romans and Christian Britons, and its mighty ones had vanished. Nevertheless, Ynys Fôn it remains to this day in that native tongue which has fought for its independence as bravely as ever old Wales fought under Prince Llewellyn; and shire proclamations emanating from the Imperial Throne may be seen on mossy walls addressed in duplicate to the voters in Anglesey and the voters in Ynys Fôn.

According to old Rowlands, Anglesey's antiquary and historiographer, the stock of Anglesey is very pure. "The progeny of Japhet crossed" thither, "undaunted by the huge stupendous mountains intermixed with dreadful amazing dens, on the western side called Wales." These wanderers brought with them distinct traces of their high lineage and connection with the Tower of Babel; and the latter is still hinted at in the similarity of many Cymric and Hebrew words. Thus, the word "cromlech" is nothing but the Hebrew "co'rem luach," a devoted stone or altar.

Again, what were the Druids except co-religionists with those early Israelites who held their meetings in the groves of Palestine? The oaks of Anglesey and the oak of Mamre were revered for the same reasons.

These Druids made Anglesey their "high place," whence they issued at pleasure over Wales and England, "sucking the sweets of the land," until Caius Suetonius Paulinus came with certain Roman legions and made a clean sweep of them, compelling the surviving remnant to withdraw to the Isle of Man and Ireland. Old Rowlands, though not infallible, is more to be trusted than another writer contemporary with him, who thought so well of Anglesey that he identified it and the other Mona with the Fortunate Isles of the ancients.

Beaumaris, Anglesey's capital, is a humble little city, nestling low under woods and rising ground on the landward

side, but looking over the sands and waters of the Menai Straits in front of it, at a long row of mountain-tops. Borrow, who was nothing if not enthusiastic when he was pleased, preferred Beaumaris Bay to the Bay of Naples.

There is no railway in Beaumaris, but the steamers from Liverpool bring life and festivity into the place. Week by week during the season, there is constant change and increase in the floating population. Athletic young men in flannels, and athletic young ladies in yachting costumes, succeed each other, and keep off dulness. But with the approach of autumn the visitors go; and then Beaumaris falls back to its normal number of about two thousand two hundred residents. The burly watermen who, in the midst of a gay throng of pleasure-seekers, have found words fail them to express the salubrity of the locality, recur to their memory with more truthfulness, when they do not expect to let their boats: they associate the dark mountains of the mainland with the bronchitis of winter, and shiver in anticipation of ague when they see the white mist brooding dense in the castle meadows after sundown.

Besides a stately, though ruinous old church, with an atmosphere that reeks of the dead that lie under its aisles and pews, and two or three heavy, low, rectangular houses with seventeenth-century dates upon them, Beaumaris may boast of a notable castle. It is extensive, but not imposing; indeed, it lies so low, that, at a distance of a few hundred yards in any direction, it is lost to sight. But, on a sunny day, one may readily feel an affection for the venerable ruin, with its velvety sward, its ivy-clad walls, and its rocks cawing and circling overhead. There may be a straining of truth in the words of the local laureate, that its

Every stone

Records a sigh, a murder, or a groan;

but no doubt the lives of those who kept it have not wholly followed the primrose way.

But Anglesey's capital has suffered one sorrow which to this day is more to it than all the tragedies of its castle. The wreck of the "Rothsay Castle," bound from Liverpool to Beaumaris, with many of the best-loved residents of Beaumaris on board, is seared into the hearts of people yet living. This took place in 1831. It was a windy night, and the Captain was intoxicated. He put back into port three

times for more passengers. "This in itself seemed odd to us," said the survivors; and they felt forebodings when they saw how little under the control of reason their commander appeared to be. Nevertheless, all went fairly well until the Anglesey coast was at hand. Then, in a heat of drunken obstinacy, he ran the ship into the sands called the Dutchman's Bank, and let the waves of the incoming tide do the rest. The disaster worked to completion during the night; and when the people of Beaumaris went to the water-side the next morning, they found their dead relations and friends embedded in the sand, or bestrawing it. More than a hundred were drowned. Among the passengers were the two daughters and the son of a local doctor. This doctor was a proud and choleric man. One of his daughters was wooed and won by the curate of the parish church; but, in a fit of pique, when the young folks sought his consent to the match: "I had rather see you dead than married to young—" said the indignant father, and he never relaxed his opposition. The bodies of these girls were never found; but their brother, a graduate of Jesus College, was discovered bolt upright in the sand close by the town, his eyes fixed in a horrifying lack-lustre stare.

Another curious circumstance may be related in connection with this same family. A Beaumaris poet had a son who was in love with the other of this doctor's daughters. From his official position, it became his duty to see to the bestowal of the different bodies as they were washed ashore from the wreck. He was a sensitive man, and the excitement of his task, added to his dread of what he might be called upon to see, struck him mortally. He pined away and died, much to the surprise of his medical attendants. A post-mortem examination revealed the singular fact that his heart had turned in his body.

But indeed the loss of this ship fell like a bolt into so many houses, that even now the elderly gossips of Beaumaris find no subject of talk so engrossing, or so provocative of those half-pitying, half-complacent sighs which are the tribute of a resigned humanity to sorrows they have deplored until they can deplore them no longer. Tradition has it, that in the distant days of the King Helig-ap-Clunog, the sea swept over a village on the sands opposite Beaumaris, and that thenceforward the site was known as the Place of Weeping. The "Rothesay Castle" seemed to confirm this name only too well.

Among historical persons, natives of Anglesey, Owen Tudor may come first in importance. This handsome soldier has played a strong part in the formation of the Royal line of England; no wonder, therefore, that he is in high repute still in his native land. The "u" is pronounced in Welsh sharply, like the "i" in pin; so that one has to get accustomed to numerous directions and questions about this and that relic of the great Owen "Tidder." In a green glen, away from any high road, and overshadowed by a cluster of well-grown trees, there stands a house called Plas Penmynydd, which boasts of being the birthplace of Tudor. But this, of course, is credible by the credulous only. It is, in fact, a modern building, with some bits of old masonry let into the newer walls. A little away from it, is some ancient stabling, with rough beams traversing the rooms, black from age; and over the porch is a date in antique lettering, hard to decipher. This may have really seen Owen, when he was a boy, before his soldierly qualities had matured so graciously that a Queen Dowager was content to call him husband.

"Oh, yes, Owen Tidder! Tidder! Tidder this!" observed an old Welsh labourer, when I cross-examined him; he was lounging by the stable with a pitchfork in his hand; but all his proof was in that assertion. There are they who affirm that Tudor's father was a brewer in Beaumaris. Others say that he was of Royal descent, as proud as his queenly wife's; that his ancestry were Princes of Wales, called Theodore, whence Tudor. Yet others see in him a mere country gentleman, farming lands worth the substantial sum of three thousand a year. It is not easy to discriminate, when four-and-a-half centuries have gone by. But Plas Penmynydd may well have been Tudor's, and there may certainly be a measure of truth in the romantic tale about Queen Katharine's sending envoys into Anglesey to find out how her dear Owen stood in worldly matters, and the curious hazard by which the knights came upon Owen's mother milking her goats with her own hard hand. Doubtless, however, the Queen had made up her mind, and the embassy to Anglesey was never meant to induce a separation in reality. And so Owen became Clerk of the Wardrobe, Queen's Consort, and the father of three stout boys and a little daughter, by Henry the Fifth's widow. Their marriage was probably

already celebrated when the Protector framed the statute, making it penal in the extreme "to marry a Queen Dowager without the consent of the King and his Council." Yet, that did not secure poor Owen. He was arrested and put in Newgate, and, when he broke from the prison, was summoned by Henry the Sixth, through his council, as the person "which dwelled with his mother, Queen Katharine," to appear before the council, and say what he could for himself.

Owen had pluck enough to enter London in the teeth of his perils. He proceeded to Kensington Palace, where the council was sitting, and here he spoke so manfully that the young King caused him to be set at liberty. Again, however, he was clapped into Newgate; and a second time the muscular soldier broke out of his prison. He then withdrew to his native land, reasonably mistrustful of Courts now that the Queen was dead.

When Henry the Sixth came of age, he allowed Tudor forty pounds a-year, and later, we learn from Rymer's "Foedera," that "out of consideration of the good services of that beloved Squire, our Ounes Tudor," the King determined, "for the future," to take him into special favour by making him park-keeper of the Royal "parks in Denbigh, Wales."

The "good services" mentioned did not refer to the three stout offspring, but to Owen's exertions at Agincourt and elsewhere, before his face had pleased the Queen.

Once again Owen drew his sword, when this was required of him; and thus he died a soldier's death at Mortimer's Cross, fighting for the cause of Lancaster.

Some two miles from Plas Penmynydd is the church of Penmynydd, an old building on a hill. A knight and his wife in effigy on a marble tomb are pointed out to the stranger as "Tidder" and his queenly spouse. It is notoriously false; but the fancy sticks to Penmynydd, and is of some profit besides, if, as it is averred, our reigning Queen, many years ago, paid for the restoration of the little chapel of the church, supposing that she was doing honour to the grandsire of one of her predecessors on the throne.

Elsewhere in Anglesey one sees the massive black oak bedstead on which our good Owen used to sleep, the razor with which he shaved, and such relics. The bedstead is an excellent piece of carved work; but a verbal warranty, going back to the

year 1450, cannot be accepted without a scruple.

After Owen Tudor, the name of Gronwy Owen is the most familiar name in many Anglesey households. Mr. Borrow has told the tale of Gronwy Owen's life and his struggles with penury, in his own simple, lucid, and inimitable manner. Llanfair-mathafarn-eithaf is the hamlet which claims Gronwy Owen, Anglesey's sweetest bard. It is a cheerless place in itself. For two or three miles round the country is level, without being perfectly flat. Except where a lonely lane wanders between the cross roads, there are no hedges. Irregular patches of rough, poor pasture lands meet the eye in all directions, divided by stone walls three feet in height. Black bulls give a little colour to the sombre landscape, and form a contrast to the white cottages which straggle here and there, with their appurtenances of pigsties, and dung-heaps for the amusement of the poultry. Where the land does rise a few feet above the level, and breaks into a tiny bluff of grey rock, it is tufted with purple heather. Only in one place are there trees of moderate height. This is where two or three low cottages are grouped in a very shallow indent of the ground—"pant" in Welsh, meaning "a hollow"—under the shade of some sycamores, and the centre house of them is that of Gronwy Owen, or what survives of it.

One looks on this side and that, and pities the hapless poet for being born in such a spot. But suddenly the pity goes, for in the distance, fifteen or twenty miles away, the Carnarvonshire mountains are seen bold against the sky-line, with nothing in the foreground to lessen their actual height by more than a foot or so. One understands, in that moment, whence Gronwy got his inspiration.

The cottage is a very mean affair: of stones and wood commingled, and thickly whitewashed, to hide the material from prying eyes. By the door one sees the initials "G. O." on a stone let into the wall.

"Yes, indeed; it is true," said the poor woman who now lives in the hovel, and claims relationship with Owen on the mother's side. "It was Gronwy Owen himself that cut it. And many a man has come to see our Gronwy's house."

She was a poverty-stricken soul of about forty, thin-cheeked, and old before her time. A slip of a girl was in the doorway, nursing a child. "Dim Saesneg," said she, without

a change of expression, when I spoke to her. I mentioned Borrow's name to the woman, and instantly her eyes brightened. "Oh, yes, I remember Mr. Borrow," she said. "I was quite a little girl, but my sister she was larger, she was; and it was my sister which wrote her name in Mr. Borrow his book. And I remember that he picked some bits from the tree there, and put them in his pocket. And I see it all after in the book which he wrote." Adjoining the dwelling was the only fragment of the old house which remained. It was a washhouse, a dairy, and a smithy all in one. "Here, drink, gentlemen," said the woman, offering me a glass of buttermilk. The little nursemaid watched our proceedings with large eyes, as stolid as an ox, until she was sharply bidden by her mother to take herself off.

The living-room of the house was typical of the same room all through Anglesey: kitchen and parlour in one. A tall dresser of polished wood occupied one side of it, and showed the staring faces of a number of willow-pattern and other plates; while, for polite ornament, there was also a good-sized porcelain vermilion-and-white representation of the Duke of Cambridge on a prancing horse. It were a degraded house in Anglesey that had no dresser. Some of them are carved grotesquely, and the oak of their material is so black that it may have come from an Anglesey tree in the time when the island was not the naked expanse it now is. For the rest, there was a glitter of tin and brass goods on the mantelpiece over the fireplace, a table by the window, a wooden screen making an artificial chimney-corner, and, on the side opposite the fire, a sort of gallery, which was ascended at bed-time.

"Yes, we are poor indeed," said the woman. "We do not eat meats, except a bit of bacon. It is potatoes, and milk, and bread, and something of that sort."

I told her that I had that morning been talking with someone who remembered hearing from an eye-witness how poor Gronwy himself used to leave the cottage early in the morning, make his way down to the rosy sands of Red Wharf Bay, two miles distant, and there, in his shirt-sleeves, and with naked feet, used to pick cockles to furnish out his dinner.

"Ah," said the woman, with a sigh, "they are good cockles at Red Wharf, and I wish I could get some!"

Red Wharf Bay, it may be said, is famous for its sweet air, its spacious sands,

and its seclusion, as well as its cockles and other shells. It is ten miles from a railway. The sands are so extensive that, at low tide, one may walk from the southern to the northern side of the bay nearly a mile seawards of the high-water mark; and the width of the bay is about two miles. Some of the highest land in Anglesey bounds it, and falls, by wooded terraces, to the shore-line, which is studded sparsely by farmhouses and fishers' huts, looking out on the long fringe of surf-capped waves rolling over the sands. But, though so remote, Red Wharf Bay teems with visitors, which its own small inn, the Myn Dôn, is quite unable to accommodate. This makes it a little awkward for a stranger not in the secret. For example, I had walked to Red Wharf from Beaumaris one bright summer's evening, and reached the bay just before dusk.

The look of the little place, nestling under the square-headed rock which is a feature of it, was so thoroughly tranquil that I feared a visitor would come upon them as something so novel that it would disturb them. But on trudging towards the inn, there appeared in its small green paddock, a gathering of thirty or forty people, old and young; the young playing tennis and cricket, the elders watching, or enjoying the quiet of the evening.

"There is not a bed in the place," said the landlady; "and look," she added, opening a door and disclosing a long table at which twelve or fifteen children were eating their evening meal with much clamour before being put to bed. Professor So-and-so with his family, Doctors and Reverends with their families, and a few stray unmarried ladies who liked children though they were blessed with none—they had filled Red Wharf Bay entirely. Me-thought it would have been a good deed in one or other of the heads of the families to advertise the fact that they had hired the whole village; but possibly they feared the future consequences of thus letting the public know of their charming little resort. On this night, to the infinite interest of the miscellaneous gathering of visitors in no manner of anxiety about their own beds, I went in vain from house to house in quest of a kitchen corner. Eventually I turned my back upon Red Wharf; and, when the stars were out, managed to persuade a more remote fisherman, who did a small trade in coals besides, that he could give me a bed. At the outset he was very positive that he would do no such thing;

but when his heart was touched, I found him to be one of the most amiable nondescripts of humanity, and his wife was as kind as himself; she could not talk English, but she spent a busy hour in preparing for the Saxon her own daughter's bed; the girl having just departed for Liverpool, where she was a nursemaid.

The connection between this Welsh island and Liverpool is of portentous result to the good people of Anglesey. The body of Wales is less near to them in many respects. By the steamers which ply to Beaumaris the Liverpool newspapers are brought and disseminated through the parishes, and the advertisements therein beget inevitable hopes and longings in many a placid farm-house which has conquered less insidious temptations towards a change of circumstances. The young men are drawn away from their healthy life at home to serve as potmen or billiard markers in the big town; and, worse still, every parish is decimated of its maidens, who cannot resist the prospects and allurements of a life of comparative excitement.

The latter go as domestic servants. Sometimes they come home again, bettered in every way. Often they forget their native island; or, at least, let it slip from their memory in the midst of their engrossing labours. And often, too, they die young in Liverpool, or return to die; the town has written its mark upon them. Hence, in going from churchyard to churchyard in Anglesey, one sees a remarkable number of unpretentious blue slate tombstones, commemorating girls and young women, between seventeen and twenty-five. In many instances, "died at Liverpool" tells its own tale. At other times, one may infer that Liverpool has had a hand in their early death. This fact was forced home upon me one day, when I was trudging across the sands of Newborough, in the south-west of the island. I came to a lonely farmhouse, with a few cowering shrubs on the seaward side of it. Two carts were outside the premises, and within, on a circular piece of turf, fronting the house, seven or eight men were uncording a white-wood packing case, as it seemed. At first, I did not notice that the blinds of the house were drawn, nor that an old man and woman were standing by the door, watching the men at work, and now and again wiping their eyes. Well, the case was unbound, and the nails extracted; and then was disclosed a coffin. The old farm-people had let their grand-

daughter go to Liverpool to seek her fortune like the rest; and now they were going to bury her in her own land. "She was only nineteen, and a sweet creature," said my informant.

But it is time to end this paper. Perhaps my few observations may help to remind the traveller, en route for Dublin, that Holyhead is something more than a landing-stage, and that Anglesey, besides giving superb prospects of Snowdon, at little cost of one's legs, affords agreeable pastime for anyone who likes uncommon peregrinations. Old Rowlands makes a cheerful little vaunt about the consequence of the larger island; which vaunt may still apply in its credit, though the days of "divine right" are gone for ever. Queen Anne, he says, was Sovereign of Scotland, through Walter Steward, who was born at Aberffraw (in Anglesey); of Wales, through the heirs of Prince Llewellyn, also born and bred at Aberffraw; and of England, through Owen Tudor. What was good for Queen Anne is good for the House of Hanover, also. Again, that famous traveller, Madoc ap Owen Gwynedd, who sailed to the West, and had inklings of the New World, three centuries before Columbus, was also born in Anglesey. Thus, without considering its innumerable bards, this neglected island of Great Britain is of some repute in the world's history.

AN INVALID'S GRIEVANCE.

EVERY man has a grievance. I have mine, and it is a sore one. It is against novelists. I have one or two others of a minor order against that same race; but my chief grievance is the infamous conspiracy they have entered into to misrepresent and to injure invalids of all sorts and kinds. It is no use appealing to their sense of honour or truth, or pointing them to the beauty of realism; they only smile, and, muttering something about delicacy of sentiment, pursue their course.

What is the result? Take up one of their books, and you are gravely assured that beauty, talent, goods, nay, every gift desired by man, varies in inverse proportion to health. Their heroines—for I must confess that this species of fetishism is generally reserved for ladies, though, from time to time, men come in for their share—become more and more beautiful, amiable, and unselfish as their strength fades away. The little frailties inherent in them as

human beings gradually disappear; their minds, no matter how dull in the days of their strength, in weakness become transcendent in penetration and judgement; whilst their moral natures shine with a radiance only explicable upon the supposition that the glory of another world is casting its halo around them. They bear their own sufferings with patience, and are always ready to lend an ear of sympathy to their friends; their cheerfulness is proverbial; whilst their tact and kindness brighten the lives of those who have the happiness of being brought into contact with them.

Such are the invalids of fiction. Now, novelists have taught us that this is what human nature develops into when brought under the elevating influence of ill-health. There is something very pretty and taking in the fancy, and, so long as you are strong and well yourself, no doubt you cordially support the novelist's theory. Nay, more, if your friend, when illness comes upon him, fail to act up to it, you immediately begin to suspect that there must be something wrong in him; that you have been mistaken in your conception of his character; and straightway you shut up the font of your sympathy, and pass by on the other side. And all because the poor man has failed to conform to a fanciful ideal which novelists have set up as the standard, which ideal is fundamentally false and unnatural, and yet for the sake of it you sacrifice your dearest friend.

Now, was ever anything more manifestly unjust? Why should I, who, in my strongest, happiest days, was no better than my fellows, be suddenly called upon to develop all sorts of transcendent virtues because, forsooth, I have lost that which made life most precious? I am to become more beautiful! How can ill-health bring beauty? Can it make a retroussé nose more aquiline, or little colourless eyes large and brilliant? No matter how perfect the contour, who prefers a sharp jaw-bone to a well-rounded cheek, a trembling, tottering gait to the easy, supple movements of the strong?

Yes, you may reply, but consider the delicate beauty that accompanies consumption. Some roses, as they are fading, for a few hours assume an unequalled brilliancy of hue; but, as it is the brilliancy of decay, it is repulsive. In the same way the bloom of disease—even in the few cases in which it has any bloom, though it more frequently brings with it haggard cheeks and heavy

eyes—being associated with decay, can surely never appeal to a healthy sense of the beautiful.

Then my natural amiability is to be miraculously increased; though why, in the name of common sense, I should be more amiable at the very moment my nerve is unhinged, my head heavy, and my frame racked with pain or wearied with weakness, than when the blood is coursing actively through my veins and my whole being is thrilling with a sense of vigour and happiness, it is difficult to say. Just when my attention must, by the very force of my sufferings, be fixed upon myself, I am required to exhibit an unusual amount of unselfishness. I am in an agony, and yet I must sympathise with my friend because he has a corn! I have not had a night's sleep for weeks, but I must be tenderly sorry that his brute of a dog has kept him awake for an hour! And, knowing that I may never see another spring, I am called upon to help him to decide what would be the pleasantest thing to do just when the leaves are bursting into bloom; to sketch a walking tour; to think where he will get the best fishing. Why, the very thought is monstrous!

But perhaps the cruellest rub of all is that intellectually also I am expected to improve. No doubt a whole day spent in wondering whether that confounded pain will ever cease its gnawing will have a marvellous effect in brightening my intellect and rendering my penetration more acute, my arguments more convincing.

All this I am required to do under penalty of being regarded as a monster entirely beyond the pale of humanity! That is, I must outrage every instinct of my nature, dye my soul with the deepest hypocrisy, and why? Because my friends, incited by the novelists, have chosen to prostrate themselves in worship before an ideal invalid. In our heart of hearts, we all know—at least most of us do, for the miraculous power some people possess of casting a glamour over falsehood is one of the mysteries of the nineteenth century—that ill-health, far from having any elevating effect, demoralises, in every sense of the word, those who are brought under its influence. There is suffering a man may be called upon to endure which does ennoble him; but it is not so with physical suffering; for this, by fixing his thought and attention upon himself, slowly but surely undermines his power of fixing it upon anything else. Also by

weakening his body it weakens his will-power, and surely will-power is the very mainspring of moral worth. How can a man help being unreasonable and irritable when his nerves are unstrung and quivering with pain? He may be a giant in resolution; but if his health fail him, no matter how great be his talents, his work will be defective. He may write a biting satire, a short burst of eloquence; but as for any long-sustained effort—why, the idea is absurd!

Could anyone read the works of Shakespeare or of Goethe and doubt that these men were sound in body as in mind? On the other hand, does not one feel at every turn whilst reading Schiller, or Pope, that these, with all their talents, were warped and imperfect because their bodies were not equal to their minds? If this be so with the great ones of the earth, how much more so with ordinary men and women? How can they be expected to fight against the burden of an aching body? Mind, I do not deny that some do fight against it, and even gain a seeming victory; from time to time we come across those beings who, in the midst of their sufferings, smile down upon those around them, and talk sweetly of the "Mystery of Pain"; but what is the price they pay for having reached this height? Loss of all touch with humanity; they are no longer men and brethren, but something beyond—above if you will—the ken of poor weak mortals. It was such as they who, in the olden days, walked with a smile to the stake, worthy, no doubt, of all admiration; but as for love or fellowship—could one love Cleopatra's Needle? Then, too, a taste for martyrdom is not given to every man.

But with such as these I have nothing to do; they are but the exception, and it is for poor ordinary men and women that I am pleading, and I maintain that these, if called upon to undergo a lengthened period of ill-health, almost invariably deteriorate in moral fibre, their tempers become irritable or morose, their minds dull, and their whole natures selfish. If anyone doubts this, let him appeal to the experience of a professional nurse, and some curious facts will be unfolded to him.

But what I assert is so perfectly natural that the only unnatural thing in the whole affair is that any should imagine it could be otherwise. Surely, then, it would be more kindly, both to the invalid and his friends, to face the truth boldly, for the present system of deception presses on

both, though I confess it is the former who receives my sympathy—he is so perfectly helpless. He is called upon to bear suffering; and, instead of being allowed to choose the way which might be to him, personally, the easiest, he must bear it in an unnatural and absurd fashion, in accordance with the decree of society. He knows only too well what is expected of him; and how woeful are his shortcomings! He is haunted by the fear that "Tekel" is being pronounced over him. Sometimes this dread spurs him on to make superhuman efforts to hide his weakness; but the flesh is weak, and he only sinks back a thousandfold worse for his temporary elevation.

And then the friends of the sufferer. No doubt it is very painful to see one whom they really care for, lamentably falling short of the ideal they had fixed for him; but, in fairness, they should remember that it was they, not he, who fixed the ideal. Is he to be blamed, because they had so little power of judging of his character? Of course it is a compliment to one's friend to conceive that he is so very much nobler and better than we ourselves are; still it is rather hard to punish him for not exhibiting all the good qualities with which our fancy had chosen to endow him; and still worse to feel hurt and offended at his failure. Is it kind to set a man on a pedestal from which we know he will certainly fall? Surely it would be much more comfortable to keep him on level ground, and, taking it for granted that he is in a state of moral as well as physical weakness, look on his shortcomings with a lenient eye!

According to Homer, the Greeks, when any misfortune came upon them, indulged to the full their right of weeping and wailing; nor did they scruple, from time to time, to hurl strong language at the gods who afflicted them. It never occurred to them that suffering was to be borne in silence, nay, more—with a smiling face. Why should we not imitate them, and take the ills that come upon us naturally, humanly? Before this can be done, we must drag down the false ideal which has been set up; and this requires common-sense, a rare virtue in this our day.

MONTHEROND.

AN OUT-OF-THE-WAY STORY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

Two roads, winding downwards through the Jorat forest-land, meet in an open

hollow. One of these roads comes suddenly round a big boulder of rock, and wends its way, for a hundred yards or so, along a ledge overhanging a hasty, brawling mountain stream; the other emerges from the heavy green shadow of the pine-wood, and, passing over the stream on a high, single-arched bridge, joins company with the first, and disappears behind another buttress of granite. The brook disappears, too, with bustling eagerness, as if it must at all risks keep the road in sight, and find its way out of the forest solitude into the busy world. Small blame to it either; for when a mountain brook is bearing its refreshing tribute to the great Rhine stream, and to the broad, fair sea, why should it loiter in such a quiet, unsophisticated forest corner as Montherond? At the meeting of the roads, well overshadowed by the solemn, dark trees, is a little group of buildings—an ancient church, and a massive, many-gabled inn, which was long ago a monastery, stand side by side, and, at a stone-throw's distance, just where the stream hurries into view, a tiny saw-mill. Besides these, there is a large, barn-like structure opposite to the inn, where the forest-folk meet to dance on high days and holidays; and between the church and the stream a plot of grass, in which, when they are old and weary, they can lie down to forget and to be forgotten.

As long as the forest-folk, who fill the church on Sundays, or dance in the shed on festivals, can remember, the inn of Montherond had been kept by generation after generation of Cruchons, and the sawmill of Montherond had been worked by a succession of Thalamys. Old Pierre Cruchon, the host of Montherond, was living in hopes of handing on the dignity of his position to his son Pierre, the farmer at La Criblerie, who, in his turn, would transmit his expectations of heir-apparent to his own stalwart son called by way of distinction, Pierre Maurice.

But with Thalamy at the saw-mill it was different. He had been the only son of his parents, and had never married. He had, indeed, passed the age for courtship and marriage, and, at his death, a distant cousin would come to take his place, and would bring a new name and new notions to break in on the long-established order of things. Not that François Thalamy grieved over this contingency. He had taken his dose of troubles early in life, and all his subsequent loneliness and sufferings were but the corollary of something which had

almost passed out of the recollection of his neighbours. When his day's work was over, and the water was running idly through the mill, he used to go and lounge over the churchyard wall, and think, with a kind of morbid satisfaction, how some summer evening the moths would be hovering in the dying light among the wild flowers which grew out of his own grave, as he saw them hover over the many mounds which crowded the little burial-ground. He would soon, he knew, be forgotten once he was laid there; but that did not trouble him at all, because there was no one by whom he desired to be remembered, unless, perhaps, he hoped that Verena Blanc, the maid-servant at the inn, would sometimes give him a passing thought when her grey eyes should rest for a moment on the spot where he lay.

Twenty years ago, when François Thalamy had been a young man in the thirties, there had been another Verena Blanc, the daughter of the half-witted charcoal-burner who lived at La Croisette, an hour's walk from Montherond. She was young and beautiful, with large, soft, grey eyes, and round, peach-bloom cheeks. All the lads who came to dine at Montherond were jealous of Verena's smiles and favours; but François Thalamy was the most jealous of all. He had gone through life insensible to the charms of any girl, until the day he saw Verena; and, when he had once fixed his affections and hopes on her, it was a mortal pang to him if he saw her look kindly at any other man. He might as well have resigned himself to his fate from the first, for Verena overlooked his adoration, and gave him no encouragement. His thirty-five years seemed, from her standpoint of eighteen, like uninteresting middle age. She certainly singled out none of her other admirers, but danced and flirted with them impartially. That, however, was very little consolation to Thalamy, when his heart was bursting with love for her.

Matters grew worse as time went on. One spring Sunday there came some students from Lausanne for a holiday in the forest. They dined at Montherond and danced in the thatched ball-room afterwards. After that Verena did not smile on all her admirers alike, nor distribute her dances any longer with impartiality. She kept them, as nearly as possible, for one of the students, whom his companions called René, and who came back to Montherond, Sunday after Sunday, all through the sum-

mer, till, in a reckless student fashion, he had run up quite a long bill at Cruchon's for dinners, and beer, and wine, and other things, which he could enjoy far better than he could pay for.

By-and-by the neighbours began to wonder how old Blanc could be so foolish as to let his motherless girl have so much liberty; then the wonder grew to headshakings, and more than one well-intentioned busybody tried to open the charcoal burner's eyes to something which was clear to everyone else.

The old man was slow to believe what had happened to his bright-eyed child, and, when he did understand, his feeble indignation did not seem to have any effect on Monsieur René, who, besides his passion for enjoyment, seemed to have only one other compelling power for his actions, namely a great dread of his delinquencies reaching the ears of his father.

Verena always defended her lover, declaring that he had promised to make her his wife as soon as he could screw his courage up to the necessary conflict with his father. At last, it was arranged that he should go home to Yverdon for a few days to plead their cause; and he bound himself to bring back a favourable answer the following Sunday. However, whether he went or not, or, if he went, how his mission sped, Verena never knew. The Sunday was long remembered afterwards for a terrible storm which raged through the forest; it would have been unreasonable to expect Monsieur René to walk over from Lausanne in such weather; so poor Verena made the best of her disappointment for that time. After the storm the summer came back, and she went day after day to the bridge to watch for his coming down the hill along the short vista of dark pines. But he never came; and when the snow lay all over the woodland, little Verena was born in shame and misery, and a patch was cleared in the churchyard to dig a resting-place for her broken-hearted mother.

The child grew up tall and strong with her old grandfather, till, when she was twelve years old, Madame Cruchon at the inn took her to be her maid-servant: she gave two reasons: one was that the girl's services might be counted as payment for her dishonest father's unpaid debt; the other, that old Blanc might not spoil his granddaughter and let her run to her ruin as her mother had done before her.

Madame Cruchon certainly ran no risk

of spoiling Verena by over-indulgence; the child had very little kindness shown her at the inn, but she had plenty of rough work, and plenty of hard words seasoned with a fair share of blows, all of which did not prevent her growing up graceful and lissome, nor take the light out of her grey eyes, nor the ripe fulness from her rosy lips, nor the bloom from her rounded cheek. In fact, though Verena Blanc was only the granddaughter of the poor imbecile charcoal burner, only the nameless child of dishonoured parents, she was far and away the belle of the forest hamlets, and chiefest and best favoured on her long list of admirers was her mistress's grandson, Pierre Maurice Cruchon, the heir-apparent of the farm of La Criblerie and the inn of Montherond. François Thalamy, too, had carried on his hopeless passion for the mother in a dotting fondness for the daughter; but that could scarcely be said to count for anything, except when Madame Cruchon or her daughter-in-law was cross, and then Thalamy's infatuation was as good a peg as any other on which to hang a reproach. It must be owned that Verena did not generally take the reproaches much to heart. When one is young, and when one feels that life may have plenty of good things in store, one can put up with hard work and hard words for the time being.

It was the Feast of Pentecost. The pine-trees had put bright green rosettes on the ends of their sombre branches; the mountain brook that turned Thalamy's saw-mill was singing its gayest summer song; the birds were decked out in their courting plumage; the wild strawberry-blossoms gleamed in the grassy glades; and the quiet forest roads were alive with the groups of people on their way to church. There were more people than usual, partly in honour of the great festival, and partly out of curiosity, to hear the sermon of the strange pastor, who was coming from the other side of the lake to preach at Montherond.

Old Madame Cruchon and Verena had been very busy, preparing for all the guests who were expected at the inn. The tables were laid in the great room, whose four windows looked out on to the graveyard; the largest barrel of beer was tapped; the red and white wine had been laid ready, and the cookery had been advanced as far as possible on such an occasion. Madame Cruchon, junior, a fine buxom woman of five-and-forty, had come down from La Criblerie, to help. She was dressed, as

befitted the great day, in a spotless cap, surmounted by a flat straw hat, a velvet bodice, laced in front over a fine, white chemisette, and finished off at the waist by a massive silver buckle; below came a handsome plaited skirt, white stockings of open work, and broad, black shoes. She had covered up her finery, as far as possible, with a businesslike apron; while she bustled about from one part of the house to another, with the restless eagerness of a person who is fully convinced of her own importance.

"It is a thousand pities, *belle-mère*," she said, pausing before the old lady, who was peeling potatoes under the balcony, "a thousand pities that you have no variety of vegetables; why ever didn't you provide some green peas? Early vegetables give such a style to a dinner. I wish I had known yesterday."

"And if you had known—are there green peas at La Criblerie, any more than at Montherond?"

"I could have procured some," replied the younger woman loftily, "and I would have done. At home, at Ouchy, there will be certainly green peas on the table to-day. My brother would have sent some as far as the Châlet à Gobet, and Verena could have gone to fetch them."

"Well, we shall have to do without them," said the old woman, a little snappishly—she did not like to be criticised by her daughter-in-law—"folks must be thankful for what they can get, when they come to dinner in the forest; besides," she added, "there's some asparagus, which can be handed to Monsieur le Pasteur and this Monsieur Vernier, who is to preach—"

"Asparagus!" cried her daughter-in-law, "and if you couldn't get green peas, how did you manage to get that?"

"I didn't get it—it was a present—a present to Verena, not to me, only I told her that, of course, it must go on the table to-day."

"And who in the . . . Who brought it?" interrupted Madame Cruchon.

"Why, François from the mill was down in Lausanne, yesterday, and he brought her that, and some bonbons, which must have cost two francs."

"François at the mill again," retorted the other. "He has a lot more money than wit. Why, the asparagus must have cost three francs, and two for bonbons; that makes five. It's a pity he hasn't something better to do with his five-franc piece."

"And, since Madame has taken the bonbons for dessert, as well as the asparagus," called out Verena, from her work just inside the kitchen window, "I do not think you need complain of what he has bought with this five-franc piece—if he hasn't much wit."

"And a good thing your mistress did take them. She would do well to take those silver buckles he gave you at Easter."

"Not at all," replied Verena composedly. "I shouldn't have parted with those so easily; silver buckles last longer than bonbons and spring vegetables."

"If you're saucy, I'll take them away at once myself. If I were you, *belle-mère*, I would not allow her to wheedle presents out of a half-witted old man. I call it scandalous, and no one knows what it may lead to. Listen! there is a carriage. It must be the pastor. Go, Verena and take his horse, and, mind you, no loitering to see who is going into church."

"Perhaps," rejoined the girl coolly, "it would be as well to take the asparagus and cakes back to François. If Madame is angry that I have accepted them, I will return them when I have finished in the stable."

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried Madame Pierre loudly, as Verena went towards the stable, "the impudence of the girl passes all measure. She answers me with an effrontery for which she deserves to have her ears boxed. All I can say is, that if I see our Pierre Maurice go near her to-day I will send him straight back to La Criblerie."

"She shan't go to the dance this evening, the saucy minx!" said old Madame Cruchon, loudly also. The words reached Verena's ears, as they were intended to do. "I'll give her some work to do instead; and as to Pierre Maurice, you must keep your eye on him. He is a silly boy; but he'll come to his senses after a bit."

"It is to be hoped he will," sighed his mother. "I'm sure no one knows the life I lead with him. He told us point-blank last night that he would not look twice at Elise Lannes nor Marie Veyse as long as there is a Verena Blanc at Montherond. He would be capable of marrying her—yes, of marrying her—if we would give him a word of encouragement."

"She is a tiresome girl; why can't she do her work and let the men alone?" grumbled Madame Cruchon. "I suppose I must send her away. Your aunt at

Thonon wants a strong girl to milk and make cheese. She has often asked me to spare Verena."

"Bless me, belle-mère, you must be out of your senses. Why, when she is here you can keep your eye on her and on Pierre Maurice; but if she were at Thonon, he'd be after her at once, and there'd be no one to keep a tight hand over him there."

"There's something in that; besides, I could scarcely spare her. She has the strength of a man, and her temper is not bad, though she is pert. If only she wasn't so fond of the lada. Look, there's the Pastor walking with Monsieur Lombard under the trees. He's a fine man, isn't he? I wonder what sort of a preacher he is. I wonder why that girl doesn't come in; it's time the soup was skimmed. She doesn't generally take such a time to unharness a horse and tie it up."

"She's gone off in the sulks, or else she's gossiping; she might have been in five minutes ago. I shall just go and hurry her," said Madame Pierre, with an ominous shake of the head.

Meantime Verena had set to work at the unharnessing and feeding of the pastor's horse, as if she were quite at home in the capacity of deputy-hostler. The stable was large and roomy, and dusk with the shadow of the trees which grew close round it.

The girl measured out the corn carefully, as if from habit, but the expression on her face could have had no connection with her actual occupation. Whatever was the subject of her thoughts, it engrossed her so completely that she did not hear the opening of a door at the further end of the stable, nor an approaching footstep.

"Verena," said a man's voice close beside her, "Verena." But apparently she did not hear this either. Then an arm stole round her waist, and catching her wrist held it still while another hand tried to raise her head and look into her face. All in vain.

"What is the matter, my Verena?" he asked, finding himself repulsed. "Are you angry with me? What have I done since we parted to make you meet me like this? Won't you speak? If you have anything against me, out with it, and let us make it up."

But the appeal was met by an obdurate silence.

"All right, Verena, if this is to be the order of the day, I will take my way back to La Criblerie, without even going to church. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," returned Verena tranquilly. "Good-bye, Pierre Maurice. You may just as well go back home now, as when your mother sends you; I don't want to keep you."

As she spoke she yielded so far as to allow her lover to turn her face towards him; then she drew his hand down from her cheek and pushed him away.

"Don't you want to keep me?" asked the young man dubiously. "Whom have you promised to dance with to-night instead of me. I might just as well knock him down if I meet him on my way home."

"You needn't go knocking any one down on my account," replied Verena, "I shan't dance with any one. I shan't even be at the dance."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Pierre Maurice angrily, "what's all this about?"

"I shall have some work to do this evening; that's all."

"Work to do, indeed! And what is there so important that it will not keep till to-morrow. I say you shall go to the dance, or else I'll know the reason why."

"It's as easy to know the reason, as to ask for it, Pierre Maurice. If you will promise to dance with Elise Lannes and Marie Veyse, and not so much as to look at me, I shall be there in my best clothes and my silver buckles, and find plenty of other partners."

"Then I shan't promise any such thing," returned the heir-apparent with decision. "I won't be made a fool of like that. I've told my mother, over and over again, that neither to Elise Lannes nor to Marie Veyse will I do one moment's wooing. She knows on whom my heart is fixed, and she might just as well know that she won't unfix it."

"It isn't the least use in the world to talk like that," replied Verena, keeping back a tremble in her voice. "Your heart might be fixed a thousand times more firmly than it is; but do you think a girl of any spirit would push herself into a family where she would be despised and looked down on?"

"They shouldn't despise you; they shouldn't look down on you," interrupted her lover eagerly. "I'd teach them better."

"You never would," returned the girl bitterly, "they are too fond of reproaching me with — with what I can't help, to leave off at your bidding. No, Pierre Maurice, you had better give me up. I shan't go into a house where I shouldn't be made welcome."

"Ah, Verena," cried Pierre Maurice reproachfully, "you'd better have said that a year ago, instead of telling me you loved me. I'm afraid it's all true what the folks say, and what I've always contradicted; and my mother spoke true when she warned me you'd throw me over."

"She spoke quite true," cried Verena, passionately. "Of course, she knows best. What else did you expect, since they all say I am a coquette? You can go away and say it too; it doesn't matter. Nothing matters to me. I wish I were dead and buried. I would go away from Montherond to-morrow if I had anywhere to go to. I am so very unhappy—sometimes." And the big tears of self-commiseration rolled down her cheeks, and fell, with heavy splashes, on her blue apron.

For a minute Maurice looked in mute amazement at this unusual and unexpected outbreak, half afraid of another repulse if he showed her any sympathy.

"Pierre Maurice," she sobbed, "say something to comfort me. I'm just ready to break my heart."

There was only one way he could think of to comfort her, and that was not by words.

"Well, I never!" cried a voice from the stable-door. "These are nice goings on! What is to happen next? Here have thy grandmother and I been calling this flirting child till our throats are weary; and thou hast nothing better to do than to come here and play the fool with her! Loose her this moment! Thy father shall settle with thee for this. I wash my hands of the business; thou art too headstrong for me."

Madame Pierre ruled in her family with a rod of iron. As she spoke, her son's clasp of the sobbing girl involuntarily loosened, while Verena looked up at him with a pitiful glance.

"Hast thou nothing to say, Pierre Maurice?" she cried. "If you love me as you say, don't let me feel that I have no one to stand up for me."

"Mother," began the young man, hesitatingly, as if he knew that all appeal would be useless, "you are——"

"Hold thy tongue, thou senseless boy!" broke in Madame Pierre. "I will not hear one single word. Loose that hussy this moment, and go straight back home. That ever a son of mine should be led into such folly and wickedness!"

The crushed look in Verena's face had hardened into one of defiance. She drew herself up, and faced her lover's mother.

"Why do you talk of folly and wickedness?" she cried. "It is you who are foolish and wicked; and, if I ever do anything wicked, there will be more blame at your door than at mine. Do you not call it a sin to treat any woman as you treat me? You have always been hard on me. You have always taunted me with things which happened before I was born; and now that you know that Pierre Maurice has chosen me instead of a richer, better-born girl, you are ten times worse. But I have my pride too. I will go away from Montherond—away to where you will never hear of me again, neither you, nor your son, nor anyone."

"I sincerely hope you will," answered Madame Pierre, struck aghast at the girl's fury. "No better thing could happen than that you should follow in your father's steps, and go away without leaving a trace of yourself. If this lad is such a fool as to fret for a week or two, he'll soon get over it. It won't take much to cure him. He doesn't mean to marry you; and you would be a bigger fool than he is to expect him to."

But Verena was already out of hearing. In less than a minute she was safely barred into the garret where she slept, and which neither threats nor entreaties could prevail on her to leave.

"I don't know what you take my word for, mother," said Pierre Maurice, stolidly, as his mother turned to go; "but I swear to you the solemnest oath I can swear that Verena Blanc shall be my wife, if I wait till I am old and grey to be able to marry her."

IN THE DIALS.

YEARS ago Seven Dials by night was notable for a ferocious kind of gaiety. There was a glare about the public-houses, there had been seven once, people used to say; one between each of the seven streets that opened—if such a word could be used about such close, fetid, and miserable thoroughfares—anyhow, finished upon that doleful round, which was the type of all that was sordid, low, and dangerous in the way of streets.

Still the gaiety was there, a feverish, excited, tipsy kind of gaiety, manifested in hoarse songs, loud oaths, free fights, and a general abandon; lights flared, the doors of the public-houses were always on the swing, and the fumes of gin, beer, and

tobacco seemed to hang about the place in a kind of visible fog. It had been so for long enough. Hogarth's Beer Street and Gin Lane are within sight of St. Giles's spire; and the tipsy woman, whose babe is tumbling from her arms, and the besotted tipplers, lost to all sense of humanity, might easily have been matched in the present century.

But all this has changed. The Dials indeed look as wretched and sordid as ever, but dull now and depressed, without a sign of the feverish debauch of other days. There is only one dial remaining, by the way, and that upon a house whose frequenters seem no more noisy and quarrelsome than the general run of people in respectable neighbourhoods. The other dials Time has put back into his poke, and we shall see them no more. There were never more than six, although it is said that nobody ever yet succeeded in counting the number of streets that open into the Dials, in spite of the evidence of the poet Gay, who probably only went by hearsay:

Here to seven streets, seven dials count their day,
And from each other catch the circling ray.

But whether six or seven, the uncritical belief of former days in the public-house dials must be renounced. As the above distich intimates, it was from a central pillar adorned with a certain number of dials that the quarter originally took its name—a pillar which all the authorities say was removed some time in the last century, in order to dig for treasure supposed to be concealed, but never found, about its foundations. There is a pleasant touch of romance about this last statement, which suggests all kinds of speculations. The man who designed and built this quarter, now just about two hundred years ago, had made a fortune out of public and private lotteries. How if he had designed the whole thing as a kind of puzzle prize, and had buried the gross lot of a hundred thousand pounds or so, for the benefit of the diviner clever enough to read the enigma? But such speculations would carry us too far afield, concerned as we are chiefly with the present aspect of the Dials.

It need hardly be said that the whole region is undergoing a complete change; the labyrinth of dark and dangerous streets and alleys has been pierced, in every direction, by well-frequented thoroughfares. The Dials are still untouched, but the character of the place—unenviable it may be, and yet

original—is fast departing. One street, however, still retains its peculiar cachet, and from its forming a continuation of Saint Martin's Lane, and being a convenient thoroughfare between Charing Cross and Oxford Street, was always the most respectable and thriving part of Seven Dials. It was long the head-quarters of the bird-fanciers of London, and at night there would be a regular bird market going on, at which birdcatchers, fanciers, and dealers, with sellers of chickweed, groundsel, and bird-provender of various kinds, met upon the pavement, and bought, sold, and exchanged their wares. Nowadays, you would find more bird-fanciers proper about Lisson Grove or Bethnal Green, than in the neighbourhood of the Dials; but one street still remains a mart for birds, with dealers no longer of the peripatetic order, but the occupiers of roomy shops and extensive premises. Here are shops devoted to the sale of birds and beasts—where you may suit yourself with a canary, a piping bullfinch, with a pair of game chickens, or even a fighting cock; a couple of lovely white lop-eared rabbits, a dormouse, or a squirrel. As for white mice, they have a clientèle and literature of their own. The "Boy's Own Book of White Mice," which, with many other manuals of a zoological character, is on sale at our bird dealer's, suggests the popularity of these small animals among successive generations of schoolboys.

Wanting a rhinoceros, an alligator, or a boa-constrictor, one would not go to Seven Dials, although, no doubt, any of these might be procured to order; but a monkey might be picked up on the spot; and of the small deer of animated nature there is an abundant supply. One or two shops devote themselves to the sale of the fauna of our woods and fields. Time was, in the Tom and Jerry epoch and earlier, when a badger was always ready for the use of noble sportsmen in trying their dogs; and rare specimens of the scarcer of our English wild beasts occasionally find their way to the Dials. Sometimes a snake is to be seen, curled up in a glass case, or writhing about, hissing defiantly at the group of spectators who are sure to collect about the show. Lizards and frogs crawl and hop about their narrow hunting-grounds. There are rats in cages, and white bull-terriers; a raven pecks viciously from its wicker tenement, and sets the pies and jays on the shelf above chattering and fighting. Anything like a disturbance, however, is

against the rules of the establishment; quarrelsome neighbours are separated, and order is restored.

The presiding genius of the establishment—a lady of fallow complexion, with thick, black ringlets—moves about among her flock, with an eye to everything that is going on. When the day is fine, the singing birds are put outside to take the air. There is a fine old-fashioned ledge over the shop-window which seems expressly adapted for bird cages. There are clean white curtains in the window above, and a muslin blind; and a card by the door informs us that this room is to let. What an altogether unique opportunity for acquiring an experience such as might have befitted one of Dickens's heroes—a lodging over the bird and animal shop, and looking into Seven Dials; to listen to the skylarks and the piping bullfinch, as one lies in bed on Sunday mornings; to make friends with the bull-terrier, and draw out the conversational powers of the raven. There is a suggestive charm about the idea, and yet it is an idea born after its due time; one would feel like a ghost under such circumstances, and listen always for voices which had long been silent.

Other dealers concern themselves more with aquatic animals, and not only animals, but vegetables: clinging water-weeds, and snails which are at home either above or below the water, with formidable water beetles clicking their formidable claws against their glass prisons; with sticklebacks and other fish of a hardy habit and social temperament. Efts, and newts, and such-like miniature crocodiles congregate on little islands in their aquatic globes; and all these creatures look bright and healthy while the traffic of a great city passes under their very noses.

Hereabouts, too, you may find a zoological artist ready to make the counterfeit presentment of any deceased favourite, whether in fur or feathers. An old curiosity shop, too, is still in existence, with bric-à-brac of miscellaneous character, and a specialty for old coins, medals, tokens, and the humbler relics of old London; tobacco-pipes which may have been smoked by Elizabethan buccaniers; pilgrim bottles; and leaden tokens, such, as in returning, Canterbury Pilgrims wore on their hats; and other unconsidered trifles.

All this colony of dealers in animated nature is ancient enough, and seems to go back to the time when Saint Giles's parish, if not literally in the fields, was near enough

to meadows, ponds, streams, hedges, and thickets to make the place a convenient rendezvous for birdcatchers and sellers of herbs and simples.

It was not the fault of the inhabitants of St. Giles's that this irregular market was not formally constituted. As the City records show, in the reign of Charles the First they purchased the right of holding two markets and three fairs from Trinity College, Oxford; a right which the college authorities were enabled to grant, owing to the former liberality of the then King's father, James, who had bestowed upon them a number of blank charters for fairs and markets, to dispose of at their pleasure, the proceeds to help to build their new hall. The fathers of the City, however, put a foot down upon the undertaking. They had a charter, too, an earlier one—time of Edward the Third—granting that no markets should be allowed within seven miles of the City; and this charter, backed by the influence of the City, prevailed with the inner Star Chamber of the period, and the Saint Giles's markets and fairs were suppressed.

At that time Seven Dials had no existence except as an ill-drained and malodorous piece of ground, known as Marshland or Cock and Pye Fields, the latter name derived from the sign of a tavern which stood at a corner of the plot. There is even now a damp and humid feeling about the Dials, and if there be any fog about the town there it hangs most persistently. The houses, indeed, are of a solid, substantial character, although among the earliest efforts of the speculative builder, and were intended to form a genteel, if not aristocratic, quarter. For, indeed, the reputation of St. Giles's for poverty and squalor is not a matter of ancient history. And now the whole district is changing its character, poverty is in course of being driven further afield by modern improvements, or, anyhow, demolition and rebuilding. One sign of the change is the disappearance of the barbers' shops, with their variegated poles—of which we shall now find few about the Dials. It is recorded by J. B. Smith, a famous authority for the traditions of Old London, that, desirous to undergo a Sunday shave by genuine hands, "I repaired to Seven Dials, where, in Great St. Andrew Street, a slender female performed the operation, whilst her husband, a strapping soldier in the Horse Guards, sat smoking his pipe."

The ancient connection, too, between bird-fancying and barbers, as exemplified in Mr. Pol Sweedlepipes, at whose house lodged the more famous Mrs. Gamp, seems now well-nigh dissolved. The homely ways, indeed, of other times have departed even from the Dials, and probably before long their last relics will be swept away. But there is still a shop devoted to ballads of the old-fashioned sort, with the name of Fortey over the doorway, and in smaller letters "successor to Catnach." And here is a name that wakes memories of old St. Giles's, a name that collectors of ballad literature still love to dwell upon. Not here, indeed, was the original Catnach press, but in a court out of Monmouth Street, or Dudley Street, as it is now called, once noted for its old clothes marts, and yet well within the circuit of Seven Dials.

At Fortey's shop you may still buy strings of ballads with the archaic and rudimentary woodcuts; but even here change is at work—ballads are giving place to music-hall songs, and the last dying speech and confession has vanished from the scene.

It was in this last kind of literature that Catnach excelled. His great coup in that way was in his accounts of the murder of Major Weare by Thurtell, and the subsequent execution of the latter. In reality, Thurtell met his fate with wonderful courage. Just before he stepped out on the scaffold, Thurtell, who was dressed with extreme neatness in the fashion of the day, begged a last favour of the undersheriff—it was to tell him how the great fight terminated—a fight near Worcester on the previous Wednesday, between Tom Spring and Irish Langham.

"It has been a hard-fought battle," replied the functionary with unction; "it lasted for two hours and five minutes, and Spring was a great deal punished, but he won it."

"God bless him! He is an old friend of mine," said Thurtell, as he made himself ready for his last toilet.

Indeed, from the beginning to end, there were such singular and dramatic features about this tragedy, that the public interest was thoroughly aroused, and Catnach's broad sheets sold in thousands. But when the last scene was over and Thurtell's dying speech—not the real one, be sure—had been hawked all over the town, it occurred to Catnach to try and revive the languishing excitement, and he had an

immense number of sheets printed apropos of nothing, but headed in big type: "We are alive again!" a startling announcement for the public when the thoughts of all were running on Weare and his murderer. But the joke or hoax was very ill-received, and Catnach had hard work to appease the crowd of ill-used vendors and buyers, who, not without reason, resented warmly such a catch-penny trick.

POOR FOLK.

A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

By the Author of "*David Ward*," "*The Story of a Sorrow*," "*A Dreadful Mésalliance*," etc. etc.

CHAPTER I.

"YOU are under no obligation to keep the child, and, of course, you understand that?"

"Yes."

She stood before the lawyer in her limp shawl and faded bonnet, with her hard hands folded in an attitude of hopeless acquiescence.

She was a thin, parchment-coloured woman, with prominent cheek bones, sunken, tintless eyes, and a bowed figure; a woman so broken by labour and self-abnegation, that only her jet-black hair saved her aspect from the impress of absolute old age.

"You know I told you a year ago that my client would pay no more for maintenance, and therefore you have kept the child at your own risk," the lawyer went on, leaning back easily in his comfortable office chair, and surveying the poor drudge before him with his alert and penetrating glance.

"Yes, I remember."

"Then what is the good of coming here again to waste my time and your own?"

"I thought you might have something different to tell me."

"Unfortunately I have nothing different. A great many people who promise to pay forget. I am not aware that the people who promise not to pay ever amend their ways, in my experience at any rate."

"Then what am I to do?"

"Whatever you like, Mrs. Rayna. You know, when I saw you last, I explained fully that my client was not responsible for this child, whom he had adopted, so to speak, more as a matter of feeling than as a matter of necessity. He paid you to take charge of him as long as he could;

when his way of life altered he intimated the fact to me, and I advised you to get rid of the child somehow, as he had no claim on you, and no one expected you to be responsible. You may recollect when I suggested the expediency of putting him on the parish how indignant you were."

"I don't remember being indignant, sir," the woman answered with her hopeless intonation. "I said I would never put him on the parish, as long as I had strength to work for him, because I loved him. I don't think I said anything more, sir."

"Well, possibly not," he said impatiently; "at any rate you elected to keep him, and that ended the matter as far as I was concerned."

Mr. Lipsilt rose as he spoke, closed his desk with a vicious little snap, and proceeded to draw on his light overcoat. The lawyer was not naturally more unkind than other people; but he had acquired sharp ways towards the poor, having pronounced opinions regarding their density.

It was the close of a long, hot office day, and he wished to get out of the sultry precincts of his business premises in Chancery Lane with all dispatch, and there stood Mrs. Rayne stupidly retarding him, and quite oblivious of all his emphatic movements. Of course he could not wait to be ceremonious with her, he just turned his face sideways towards her, and said briefly: "I have nothing more to add."

"Very well, sir." She had been abstractedly fingering the attenuated fringes of her shabby shawl and mutely questioning him, with dull, beseeching eyes, and there was something of despair in her gesture as she dropped the corner of the shawl and turned away.

Harsh as Mr. Lipsilt could be, he was not utterly invulnerable. He spoke out hastily as the woman neared the door: "If you choose to keep the boy, you should make him useful."

"He is very useful. I don't know what I should do without him at home when I'm away."

"You should find a way of getting him to earn something. Many children contribute a good deal to their own support at his age."

Mrs. Rayne paused on the threshold, and turned her dejected face into the room again.

"If I did not need him in the house so much, I should like to keep him at school."

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course, if you choose to make a gentleman of him——" he said, with a slight laugh.

"He is so clever," the woman answered, apologetically; and then, without waiting for anything further, she withdrew, closing the door softly behind her.

"They are all alike," Mr. Lipsilt said, half aloud—"all alike: foolish, and thriftless, and desperately charitable."

Now that there was no one to retard him, the lawyer's movements became more leisurely. He looked round the office, pushed a chair straight, polished the nap of his hat slowly with his coat-sleeve, and then proceeded to draw on his gloves.

"A man should never try to do a good turn to anyone, and then he would be less likely to incur reproaches," he said to himself thoughtfully. "Out of pure good-heartedness, I provided that woman with a nurseling, for which she was paid for years and years; and now, because my client chooses to assert his independence, she turns round and blames me!"

Poor Mrs. Rayne had never thought of blaming anyone. What was certainly a great misfortune to her she had mutely accepted as a piece of her habitual ill-luck; but to have admitted that would have spoiled the point which it pleased the lawyer to make at that moment. Posing as ill-used now and again seemed to lend a flavour to his habitual prosperity.

Meantime, Mrs. Rayne went home rapidly, keeping out of the way of the well-dressed people who thronged the thoroughfare, and moving with the furtive step which in time becomes habitual to the down-trodden.

To keep out of notice, to get home quickly, to escape the cutting sense of contrast with the surrounding prosperity, was the dominant instinct which had hardly grown to the intensity of a motive with her, when an open landau swept suddenly towards and past her, and the little cloud of dust cast up by its flashing wheels was puffed carelessly by the warm June wind into her face.

Mrs. Rayne stopped suddenly with a shiver, despite the heat. That fair, handsome, well-preserved woman, with her breezy laces, her delicately-tinted clothing, her dainty gloves—how many memories did the mere sight of her recall to the poor drudge toiling through the dust! And yet Lady Evelyn Hopetown, to her knowledge, had never seen Mrs. Rayne,

and was utterly unconscious that the most important event in her own history had brought about the catastrophe in the life of one so remote from her in every way.

The beautiful June evening was almost over when Mrs. Rayne reached the unsavoury court which contained the two poor apartments which she called home. Thin, wan children were amusing themselves on doorsteps, haggard women were calling to each other shrilly across the pavement, and a man or two lounged indolently against the wall, doing nothing in an emphatic way.

No one spoke to Mrs. Rayne as she passed, and she spoke to no one. In the court—contrasted with her neighbours—she wore an aspect of well-being as pronounced as her depression and dinginess had been in the more prosperous parts of the City. Mrs. Rayne was looked on as an aristocrat and exclusive, in Bloater's Rents, for several reasons. She dressed in whole garments generally; she was known to have regular employment; she had not patronised the pawn-shops for years, indeed, had never done so save vicariously; and her husband stayed at home and did not drink. That the first part of Tom Rayne's merit was solely owing to an acute attack of paralysis, and the second part to a sated appetite and general ill health, did not materially affect the question.

The rooms the Raynes inhabited were on the second floor of the tumble-down house, and that in itself was a distinction, for ground-floor rooms were generally damp and in the worst repair, and the windows of first-floors frequently suffered from stray stones when an uproar arose in the court, while higher latitudes were difficult of access. Mrs. Rayne had, therefore, managed to secure what were considered choice apartments.

And, bad as they were, they were not wholly unattractive; for, when the door opened to her latch-key, it was seen that the stained walls were covered with pictures cut from the illustrated papers, too closely arranged, indeed, for artistic perceptions, but most satisfactorily as regarded hiding dilapidations; that the bare boards were clean and mended in the broken places, and that a strong elbow-chair was drawn up close to the extinct fire.

A little boy of ten, or thereabouts, with a thin, dark face and very bright, black eyes, was the only occupant of the room

when the woman entered, and he rose and came towards her with the quick, quiet movements peculiar to habitual attendants on the sick.

"You are late," he said, in a low voice.

"Yes. I had a good many things to do."

"And you are tired," with ready compassion.

"Yes; it has been a long day, and disappointing," sighing as she untied her bonnet strings.

"And I have let the fire out; but wait, mammy," silencing her before she could speak; "there is wood here in the corner, and if you will sit down in father's chair, I shall have a cup of tea for you in a minute."

She was too tired to protest. She sat down as directed, and watched the little fellow affectionately as he moved hither and thither.

"Is father long in bed?" she asked after a pause.

"About an hour. He gets more easily tired every day."

"I bought him a few strawberries on the way home. I hope he will like them, though they aren't very first-class; the better ones were so dear."

"I am sure he will like them. It was good of you to think of it."

"What have you been doing since I went away?"

"I talked with father a while. He likes me to talk, though he always forgets what I tell him; and then I made his supper and put him to bed, and then I tidied up the room a bit; and, when you still didn't come, I finished the stockings you were darning last night."

The woman drew a breath that caught like a sob. "You are my best blessing," she said.

The little fellow flushed delightedly.

"I like doing what you do. Tom says it is mean, and girls' work, but I like it."

"Tom never cared to help," the words were fretfully resigned, "I am glad you do. I don't think I could go on unless someone felt for me," she added to herself.

"And what did you do all day, mammy?"

"I left Mrs. Brown's early, as I said I would; and then I went to see Mr. Lipsilt on business. I thought he would have some good news for me, about some money I was expecting; but he had not. The money is quite lost."

"That is bad, mammy, very bad." The thin little face took on a sharp, anxious look. To little Gordon Rayne, as the child was habitually called, a shilling represented its full value well told; and a vague sum, comprising many shillings, meant abundance or deprivation.

"Yes, it is bad; but it is well to know for sure that we are quite done with it, for then we don't count on it. We shall have to do the best we can without it, and perhaps we shall not miss it so very much. Well, after I left Mr. Lipsill's office, I came through the pretty streets as usual; saw the nice shops and the well-dressed people; and in Oxford Street, who do you think passed me in such a lovely carriage with two men on the box?"

"I don't know," clasping his hands together nervously, while his eyes grew brighter.

"Lady Evelyn Hopetown, looking so young and happy and handsome."

"And did she know you?"

"Know me—not likely," Mrs. Rayne laughed a little, as she sipped her tea. "Of course she saw me long ago among the crowd of other servants who were interested in Master Will's wife; but I am quite sure she never noticed me, and it is so long ago, and I was so different."

"Would she have known father, do you think?"

"No, she would have known him less than she knows me."

"Then she was not at your wedding?" leading up cautiously to the story of all stories that delighted his heart.

"No, you see she was not married then, herself, nor visiting at the Manor at the time; but Miss Lily and Miss Louie, Master Will's sisters, offered to be bridesmaids, and master gave us the wedding-breakfast and the bride-cake, and mistress bought me my white muslin wedding-gown, and gave me a nice black silk for Sundays, and Master Will made a speech at the breakfast."

"And father had a flower in his coat, and looked so handsome," Gordon went on assisting the narrator; "and he made a speech too, and it was almost as good as Master Will's, because father was so clever. And mistress lent her own carriage to take you both to meet the stage-coach, and everyone said it was the nicest wedding that had ever taken place on the estate."

"Yes, I suppose they did." Mrs. Rayne's hard hands were folded in her lap, and her eyes were dreamily fixed on the table

before her. "And I suppose it was true too, for your father at that time was just a fine specimen of a good-looking, smart mechanic, and I think I was a pretty girl; but what does all that matter now, when things are so different?"

"Father had gone to put the house in order for Master Will's marriage, and you were the girl at the Gatehouse, isn't that it?" the child went on with unwearying delight in the old familiar story.

"Yes, that is how it was, and he was handsome and very popular, and everyone liked him, and I liked him too, and so I married him and came South."

"And you had a nice little house of your own, and everything cosy and pretty till father fell into bad health."

"Ye-es, till he fell into bad health."

"Till he fell into bad ways" was the truth, but she could not say so to the child.

"And then all the nice things had to be sold, and when father did not get better and the children began to be hungry, you went out charing?"

"Yes."

"And five out of the eight babies died," Gordon went on, not without a certain cheerfulness, for the thought of death is seldom depressing to a child.

"Yes, five out of the eight."

"But when Tom was seven years old I came and I made nine."

"Yes, you came like sunshine, and you brought a blessing with you. Things have never been so hopeless since I had you."

There was silence for a moment, not because Gordon was absorbed in the contemplation of his own virtues, but because he was thinking of something quite different. Then his question broke the silence suddenly: "Mother, where is Dick?"

"I don't know."

"He sailed away, didn't he?"

"Yes, I put him as a passenger aboard an outward-bound vessel, and that was the last I know of him. He never came home, never wrote, never sent me a message."

"Maybe he was drowned at sea."

"No, he landed safely, I learned that at the Shipping Office. But don't speak any more about it, dear, it hurts me."

There were circumstances connected with Dick's going which his mother could not talk of to Gordon or anyone. It was always a bitter memory to her how she had been obliged to filch the necessary money, coin by coin, from the father. And yet it was her own money, part of her father's legacy of fifty pounds to her; but

there was no law then for the protection of Married Women's Property, and her husband had taken the money, and was wasting it; so, for Dick's sake, she nerved herself to try and save a part. Judging herself by her own standard, she believed now she had been wrong, and so scarcely wondered that the money had not brought a blessing.

"But you like to talk about Elsie, don't you?" Gordon said brightly, suggesting a cheerful subject after a long pause.

"Yes, Elsie is the happy one of all my children who have lived. I did the best for her that I knew, and she has turned out well."

"Did I ever see her?"

"Yes, you saw her. You were between three and four when she went away, but you would not remember her. She was a pretty girl, had the eyes and smile her father had when he was young. And when she was fourteen I sent her home to my mother. I knew mother would need a girl about the place, and I knew it would do Elsie a world of good to be trained by her. It was hard to let her go, for she was growing useful; but I never let myself regret it."

"And now she is married?"

"Yes, she married one of the servants at Hopetown Manor, and has, I am sure, a pleasant life."

"And does she never come to town with the family?"

"No, her husband is one of the fixtures on the estate, such as my father was; but I hear from her sometimes."

"But you never go to see her?"

"No, the journey is long and costly."

Gordon drew a deep breath. "When I am a man I shall buy you a new gown and bonnet, and I shall take you home to see grandmother, and Elsie, and Hopetown Manor, and we shall spend a whole summer there by the lake or in the woods."

"And father—who will see after father?"

"We shall take him too. Maybe it will do him good to see the place where he worked when he was young."

"But all that will cost money!"

"Not more than I shall earn and have. I am going to Australia one day," drawing up his head proudly.

"And what do you know about Australia?"

"All that father knows."

"And what is that?"

"All that he has heard and read. Oh, I can tell you he knows about the goldfields, and big nuggets, and 'pockets,' and every thing; and when I'm a man I'm going."

Tom Rayne was very fond of talking to Gordon. At one time Mrs. Rayne had thought this was due to Tom's good nature; later, she believed her husband was growing childish, and found Gordon very companionable—indeed, as they sat opposite each other sometimes, it would have been hard to say which was the wiser or stronger; and this long before Gordon had arrived at his present years.

Tom had reached the period of retrospect just as Gordon inquiringly faced the future. The one loved to listen, the other to narrate; and Tom told stories well when he liked.

In his capacity of skilled workman he had seen a good deal; and, if he was always the hero of his own tales, this was only right and fitting in little Gordon's eyes. The child was at the age of implicit faith; and no one hitherto had ever suggested to him that there could have existed at any period a more heroic character than Tom Rayne.

"He makes the child happy, and the child makes him good," Mrs. Rayne thought often, as she watched the pair amicably discussing some grave matter together.

By moments she had a kind of joy in the thought that the child had been abandoned. If everyone else renounced him, was he not the more entirely her own? And this thought grew very sweet when she realised that little Gordon was one human creature in whom she implicitly believed.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A NOTE had also gone forth from Mr. Burton to put off a visit from his friend and adviser next day.

Uncle Bob took longer to compose his message than his niece spent over hers; he produced it with labour and toil, with squared elbows, and possibly with a thrust-out tongue. It was written in a round, unformed scrawl; but the spelling was better than many a gentleman of higher degree could boast (the parish schoolmaster of his youth took care of that); and though it lacked grace of expression, it was explicit enough to be quite readily mastered by the recipient.

Mr. Behrens found it at his club—the only address he permitted his friend to use—and he read it with a momentary annoyance. He did not readily allow himself to be ruffled, however; and the delay had such innocent reasons to justify it that he could pardon it. The gratification of Tilly's whim would have no perceptible effect on his plans, and so, with an indulgent smile for her remembered charms, he let her have her way.

"The Anglo-Norte Company is floated," he said to himself with a satisfaction which was none the less complete because it expressed itself calmly. He took a modest pride in the acuteness of his choice of a lure. A mine to a man who had no doubt held a share in a reefing claim in that feverish age when the gold madness was at its height, and when luck ruled supreme, was not likely to be tempted by the mere chances

of these later days, when machinery guides the enterprise, and the profits (or losses) can be nicely calculated in advance; but this sea-dream of wealth untold had something in it to touch even so unready an imagination. It was a practical scheme; it was useful; its scene was near at hand, within an easy journey's limits. Everyone—and a Scotchman more than most—knew the food value of the herring; and there was a nice appeal to the national dislike of waste and love of thrift in this proposed conversion of the fish refuse into oil and guano, so that nothing might be lost.

There was no reason—now that he had practically unlimited capital at his command—why the Company should not prove a success: why, at least, it should not prove a loss to its promoter. But it was only one of many schemes that this busy brain was weaving.

"To-morrow," he said to himself, "I shall have control of all this fool's gatherings. It is a chance that doesn't come to a man in a million; I shall be the fool if I fail to use it, and that to some pretty purpose, too!"

It was perfectly true that this power was to be his; and, if John Temple had known how eagerly it had been thrust into the brokers' hands, he might have had still graver reason for distrust.

It all came about so simply, so without premeditation, that Behrens smiled when he thought of it. The Scot had invested certain large sums at the other's bidding in various companies; the adviser had but to give a hint, and he was obeyed. One day it occurred to him suddenly, as if by inspiration, to withdraw his aid and counsel.

"You can get along alone now," he said, at the end of a discussion which was of interest to both.

"No, I can't," said Uncle Bob, with great alarm. "I don't understand a darned thing about it."

"Well," said Behrens, lightly, "you don't want me always at your elbow. You'll be turning round some day, and shaking me off for a meddlesome fellow."

"Look here," said Uncle Bob, not stopping to refute this in his alarm at this threat of bereavement; "you can't put the whole pile into this herring business. Why can't you take the lot, and do anything you think best with it? I'll ask no questions," he said, in his eagerness. "You can put it into anything you like."

Behrens shook his head. He was outwardly calm, but his heart beat a pulse or two faster than usual.

"That would be an immense responsibility," he said. "Suppose I lost it, or invested it recklessly?"

"I would trust you."

The words were spoken with such a simple earnestness that Behrens was touched by something that was half pity, half gratitude.

"It would be a heavy trust," he said gravely. "You would practically make me the guardian of your large fortune—to lay it out and increase it for you."

"Just that."

"You would—supposing I consent—have to give me a legal right. You would have to sign a power of attorney."

"I'll sign any blessed thing if you'll only not leave me," said Uncle Bob, again moved by the vision of his own desertion.

"Hadn't you better take a week or two to think of it?" said Behrens, with his slow-coming smile. "You might like to make a few inquiries about me—you really know very little of me. I might be a rogue in disguise for all you know."

He spoke jestingly, but there was a half-pained look in the other's eyes.

"I've known you a good bit now, and I've never had cause to doubt you yet. I don't see why I should begin now. When I give my friendship to a man, I give it. There was a dogged sincerity in his voice. "I don't lend it, to take it back the first chance."

"Thank you," said Behrens, gravely. "I will try to be worthy of your confidence."

"There's one thing," said Uncle Bob, slowly. "Every penny I've got, and every penny I'm likely to make, is for my little lass. Her husband—when she gets one—may help her to spend it, but it will be all

hers. You'll bear this in mind when you lay the money out. You'll bear in mind that it's all for her, and that the safer it is, and the more there is of it, the easier it will be for me to leave her."

"Don't talk about that, my dear fellow; why, you've years to enjoy it before it will come in the natural course to her."

"It stands to nature that I'll die first. She's a young lass, and I'm getting to be an old man; you'll bear that in mind, and make things as easy for her as you can?"

"I will bear it in mind."

"Well," said Burton, putting out a big, hearty hand in sign and seal of this compact, "you come along here to-morrow afternoon and I'll put my name to a hundred bits of paper, if it will make you easier in your mind."

The formalities which would make this grave trust legal were thus postponed for twenty-four hours; but, practically, Behrens already, as he sat making a pretence of reading the morning papers, was fingering the other's large revenues, laying them out and sweeping in the splendid results. He had no doubts, and he needed to have none, for Mr. Burton's trust in his friend remained serenely unshaken. To-morrow, or the next day, at any hour or moment, he was ready to give convincing proof of it.

For twelve hours, however, he was at Tilly's bidding. Tilly rose with this thought lying in wait for her first conscious moments. She was to have her uncle's sole society for a day which was to extend far into the night. She was to carry him captive to Mrs. Popham's; to save him from the temptation of an interview with Behrens; and after all, what was the poor, paltry, little space of time to effect? No miracle would happen to save him from disaster, if disaster it were to be. There was not one chance in a million that Behrens would justify John's fears by developing, between now and to-morrow, a depth of rascality that should effectually alienate her uncle's faith from the Herring, Oil, and Guano Company.

These were depressing thoughts to carry forth on holiday-making, but they were presently dispelled by the need of entertaining her playfellow now that she had secured him.

He was very gentle with her, and tender beyond his wont, when he greeted her.

"What are we to do to make it a play?" he asked.

She had thought of summer delights in

some quiet country place; but, when he went on doubtfully, "there's the house," she inwardly relinquished that scheme.

"Yes," she said "there's the house; but we can't spend the day there, because there isn't so much as a chair to sit upon."

The house had been finally chosen but a day or two before, and was already in the hands of painters, carpenters, and decorators. It was one of a huge and rather sombre pile; it would have been very gloomy if it had been a villa, but, as a mansion, it was imposing. She had toilsomely explored it more than once from garret to cellar, and she had found it depressing, when she had not found it ironical, to suppose her small self its mistress. The rooms were so vast that one must needs people them if only with ghosts for company; and when she fell to wondering who had been born there and had played out his tragi-comic part there, and, above all, who had died there and had passed thence to the great hidden mystery, the irony of the situation was lost in a general sense of discouragement.

A day spent in it, even if it were passed in detecting the plumber and circumventing his wiles, would not be enlivening; but suddenly, a more cheerful alternative offered itself.

"Let us go and choose some furniture," she said; "that may be either business or pleasure, and we'll make it all pleasure by choosing only pretty and ornamental things."

Uncle Bob applauded this notion. It involved spending money and signing substantial cheques, and that was one of the few ways in which he could grasp the fact of his wealth.

"We'll buy things for the biggest parlour—that one with the windows all in a row."

"The front drawing-room?"

He nodded.

"It's all one what you call it. It used to be parlour in my day. It's your room, any way; and we'll get the smartest things in London for it."

"No. We'll furnish an ideal study; a study where there are no show books; but just the books a gentleman wants to read, and where he may be as untidy as he pleases, and may smoke without fear of detection and punishment, and even go to sleep unreprieved after dinner."

She glanced at him sideways with laughing eyes.

"Pooh!" he said, putting a finger under

her chin, and turning her face to his, "you don't suppose I'm going to be afraid of you?"

"I should think it very likely you will be. We'll have to mend our manners, you and I, and be very ceremonious, if we're to live up to our house."

"Fiddlesticks!" he said, with light contempt, "the house has got to suit us."

"Ah, but you don't know what a capacity I may develop for putting on airs. You'd better have a refuge, in case I become too good for human nature's daily food. We'll furnish that study to-day. The books, fortunately, won't take long to choose."

"We'll furnish the parlour."

This sort of rivalry was likely to go on till the will or the breath of one or the other gave out. So they agreed to a truce. They were to buy furniture, leaving the special nature of their purchases to be decided later.

They set out on this errand after breakfast, not deterred by the circumstance that neither of them knew in the least where to go. The coachman suggested Tottenham Court Road; but the sound of it carried a vague dissatisfaction to Tilly's ear, and he was finally ordered to proceed by Piccadilly to Regent and Oxford Streets, and to pause when he felt the arrest of the check-string at his elbow.

This plan had its conveniences, but it also had its drawbacks, for, as Uncle Bob kept watch from one window and Tilly from the other, their discoveries were apt to be simultaneous, with bewildering results to the coachman. They were very happy, however, and as gleeful as two children. They interpreted furniture in a widely liberal spirit, and bought so many things that Tilly by-and-by awakened to the fact that they had furnished the "front parlour" at least four times over, and had so blockaded the owner of the ideal study that no room was left for the exercise of the most modest thinking. This discovery dawned upon Uncle Bob about the same time, and they looked at each other with half-horrified amusement.

"I can't lie down on eight sofas in one day, even if I were to take them in turns," said Tilly plaintively; "and, Uncle Bob, we've bought so many library tables that there's nothing left for it but that you must turn author and write for the rest of your life."

"Let's go back and tell them to change some of them," he suggested, "you can get some china jars instead."

"We've bought a shopful of china jara. You ordered a dozen of one pattern at that last place."

"Well," he said, rather daunted, "let's go, any way. We haven't furnished the whole house in three hours."

To turn upon their steps was easy; but to determine which shop they had selected and which rejected in so wide a range, was less easy. They had dismissed their coachman when they found the exercise of jumping in and out of the carriage did not greatly help their progress, and they had thus no final source of appeal.

"I'm sure we got something here," Uncle Bob arrested Tilly before a window full of bric-à-brac, "though what it was it would beat me to say."

"I'm sure we didn't. We couldn't have bought anything out of a shop that could exhibit such a picture as that one."

After one or two futile attempts to recognise their own purchases, even when they happened to light on the right places, they gave the attempt up.

Uncle Bob was quite philosophical over the matter. He enjoyed the feeling of being rich enough not to care.

"If there's more than we can stow away we can give it to somebody else," he said, dismissing the subject carelessly. "I'm just fair starving, my lass. We'll pull up at the first place where there's anything to eat."

It was a very happy day, and he seemed to taste its pleasures as keenly as she, and with a new softening of word and gentleness of act, as if there were a wholesomer and cleaner satisfaction in this idle holiday-making than in the feverish joys of speculation. He let her have her way in everything, and it was such a playful, bright, and merry way that he must needs admire and wonder at it, and ask himself in his slow, groping fashion, whether he had not missed the true secret of riches in all those months that he had denied himself her sweet companionship. But the doubt did not go deep enough to disturb his serenity, for it came over him again that, to make her rich beyond the common was but to give her her due; and that to crown her life with prosperity was the best task he could set himself.

In the afternoon, when the demands of his appetite had been met, they found themselves, hardly knowing how they got there, in the National Gallery. They had visited it in the first days of their London life, with Behrens as their guide, and they

found their relish for art easily satisfied. It was, after all, with each other they were chiefly concerned that day, and, when they had sounded a note or two of praise, they sat down on one of the velvet lounges to rest awhile.

For a little neither of them spoke. They found themselves by accident seated opposite one of those domestic scenes which in art make the quickest and surest appeal to the uncultured eye and imagination. It was a little bit of home sentiment, that the dullest Englishman could appreciate, and it perhaps gave a new direction to Uncle Bob's thoughts.

"We should have had the lad with us," he said.

She had not thought of Fred that day, and she suffered a faint compunction that he should have been the first to speak of him.

"You'll have to be thinking of getting married soon," he said, speaking rather gravely. "I must see that business settled an' done with, and then I'll be free to go—when the time comes."

"To go?" she echoed with a note of resistance. "There is to be no going—that is, without me. You may go if you like, but remember I go too."

He smiled rather sadly.

"Ay, my lass," he said, "but there's a journey everyone of us has got to set out on by himself. It's a single ticket you take, for there's no coming back on your steps, and there's no such thing as treating a friend to be company to you by the way."

Then she knew that, in his rough fashion, he was speaking of death.

She turned upon him with a white and terrified face.

"You are not going to leave me—that way?" she demanded. "You are not ill?" She searched him eagerly with her look.

"No," he said, and there was reassurance in his face. "I'm as sound as a bell." He slapped his chest as if in proof. "I'm not complaining; I've no ail about me. But there's times—and it's often when a man's at his cantiest—that death gives him a look in the by-going and says: 'I'm minding on you; I'll set a tryst with you one of these days,' an' if he's a wise man, he'll give a nod back again and say: 'Come when ye' will ye'll find me ready.'"

"No, no, no," she said vehemently, "not for a long, long time, not till we are both old. You won't leave me? You have been father and mother to me; how could I live without you? You are sure you are not ill?"

"Ill," he said with a laugh that was more reassuring than his words. "Did ye ever see me ill? You'll have me long enough yet, my lass."

"And you won't leave me while we both live?" she pressed him eagerly.

"No," he said at last; "I've turned it over every way, and sometimes I've thought it would be best to leave the pair of ye to your own devices; but I've been kind o' father till ye' from the day you were born, and I'm swere to part. As for the lad, I make no doubt he'll put up wi' me when he finds that you an' me are just a silly auld carl an' a silly young lass that can't get on wanting each other."

"If he were not proud and honoured to look up to you as the head of the house, do you suppose I would have consented to marry him?" she said, with a flash of her eyes and an uplifting of her chin.

"No, no," he checked her with soberer sense, "he'll be the head of his own household; he need never fear that I'll meddle wi' him there. I'm not asking to share your life or his—I'm ower far on on the road of life to take up wi' new-fangled ways, and they would just be a fash to me. All I'm asking is to sit by and look on, an' the more ye spend and the finer ye live, the better I'll be content. I knew what it was to spare in my youth, and I'll not begin to stint and scrape in my age."

"Don't let us think of it any more," she said with an uneasy sigh, yet it was she who broke the new silence first. He had spoken with a seriousness which was not usual with him, and it coloured her thoughts and left them sad.

"Uncle Bob," she said by-and-by, "you have seen death often, have you not?"

"Many a time. You can't travel the world as I've done and not rub shoulders with it, whether you will or no."

"And you—you were not afraid?"

"What's the good of being afraid?" he asked philosophically. "You may die like a coward, but you've got to face it all the same. 'It is appointed to every man once to die,'" he said, "and it won't mend your chances in the next world to take the heart of a slave wi' you."

"There is one thing I want very much," she said, after another lengthened pause. Her hand lay in his, and she tightened her grasp as if she feared he might shake her off.

"Ay," he answered with a half-humorous smile, "but I'm not sure that I want my lowe snuffed out just yet."

"No, no," she said, with a kind of shocked eagerness, "but what one would hold to be good if one were dying, must be good for the living, too. I want you—since this day is mine—to grant me one grace. No, I won't put it that way. It is not a favour I am asking for a criminal, it is justice for a man who has been wrongly condemned."

"Are you sure about the wrong, lass?" he asked slowly, not pretending to misunderstand her.

"As sure as that you love me."

"Well," he said, and he spoke not doggedly or resentfully, as she had half-feared, but with a kind of subdued gentleness, "the day is your own, as you say, and I'm bound to give you any boon you speir of me. But since there's to be no favour in the business, I must needs own up to being in the wrong; and what do ye think, ye tawpie, of making an auld man go down that gait into the valley of humiliation?"

"There is no humiliation possible in the matter," she asserted. "It was a mistake—a mistake that anybody might make," she added in her wistful defence of him; "but it has made me very unhappy, and it has made you unhappy, too; I have seen it, dear, though you thought you hid it."

He neither denied this charge nor assented to it.

"You needn't be unhappy any more," he said. "You can tell the lad next time you fall in with him, that I'm willing to let bygones be bygones, and he can come out and in as before."

It was a concession without any grace in the sound of it; but she knew that his meaning went deeper and further than his words, and had a heartiness these lacked. She was not unhappy any more; she was glad beyond measure, and gay for all that was left of the short day, putting the gravities they had talked of, and the forebodings that must needs return to haunt her, aside for the moment. And it seemed to her that the day's respite, if it had done nothing to avert disaster, had held in it an immeasurable boon in this restored peace and good-will.

Her heart sang, defying any coming sorrow to rob it of its present joy.

When it came to dressing for Mrs. Popham's entertainment, Uncle Bob, indeed, relapsed somewhat from that meekness he had worn all day, and showed signs of rebellion. He pleaded for a quiet evening at home; but while her heart and her wishes sided with him, the haunting vision

of a Behrens descending on their peace, strengthened her resolution.

"Yon weedow woman doesn't want my company," he growled, "and I'm far from wanting hers!"

"She does want you; she has pined for you these many months, and has only given up asking you because your refusals were so persistent, that no woman with any self-respect could go on insisting. Besides, I wrote a note this morning to say we were coming."

He was further inwardly troubled on the subject of his dress, and inclined to be sceptical over Tilly's superior knowledge; and he developed so many dangerous and revolutionary theories in the course of their argument, that she finally became a little peremptory. At her threat of summoning Colonel Drew or Mr. Sherrington—who were certain to decide against the possibility of appearing in a lady's drawing-room with walking boots and a coloured tie—he professed at first to be mighty scornful; but he finally wavered and gave in.

She spent so much time over the question of his toilet, that she left herself but five minutes to make her own. But her happiness that night gave a radiance to her beauty that nothing could spoil; and even in her haste she remembered to gratify his love of splendour. In driving home that afternoon they had called at the bank where the diamonds were deposited, and she borrowed them for the night. The suggestion was hers, and it was born of her gratitude.

She knew that she was offending against one of the unwritten laws which were such frequent stumbling-blocks in her social path, in proposing to wear them; and that no well brought-up girl would dream of appearing in such a blaze of splendour until matrimony gave her its sanction; but what cared she, so long as she gave him pleasure?

And she pleased him hugely. When she came in in her bright, shimmering gown, that fitted her like the sheath of a flower, with the flash of jewels about her throat, and in her sunny hair, and, above all, with that new-born happiness in her smile, he forgot himself—the insult of his forced concession to fashion, the tight encasement of his feet, the embarrassing newness of his coat; and stood amazed and wondering before her.

"You're as fine as ye can hing, my lass," he said, reverting to a native idiom in his strenuous satisfaction. "There won't be one there that can hold a candle to ye."

CURIOUS CLUBS.

THE earliest club of which we have any record was "The Mermaid," in Friday Street, afterwards removed "to the Apollo Room" at "The Devil," in Fleet Street. And, in this instance, the first was the greatest, for not even "The Literary Club," of which Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke, Garrick, and Goldsmith, were members, could compare with that which, founded by Raleigh, included Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Selden, and most of the other wits of Elizabeth's time. Imagination may help us to picture that incomparable assemblage. There at the head of the table, in his chair of state, is the herculean form of the President, "rare Ben Jonson," with his rugged, ill-carved features lighted up with intellectual fire, and his deep-set eyes gleaming beneath their bushy pent-house brows with witty malice, as in stentorian accents he levels some thunderbolts of satire against friend or foe—for he spared neither; near at hand is the noble, pensive face of the "Sweet Swan of Avon," illumined by the merry humour of the moment; and Raleigh's handsome countenance, bronzed on the Spanish main, bringing with it a flavour of sea and camp; and there is stately Burbadge, who, after playing Hamlet, has come from "Blackfriars" in company with his "First Gravedigger," roguish Will Kemp. And so we may dream on, until we have marshalled before the mind's eye all the wit, and learning, and gallantry of that incomparable time.

Clubs did not flourish during the troublous times of Charles the First and the Commonwealth, though in the latter time there was the celebrated "Rata," established by James Harrington, the author of "Oceana," for the discussion of religious and political opinions. During the reign of Charles the Second, the more bitter Anabaptists, Presbyterians, and Republicans formed the notorious Calves' Head Club in derision of the Royalists. Doubts have been thrown upon the authenticity of the accounts given of the proceedings at these assemblies; but they were pretty nearly after the following style. The staple dishes at table was a calf's head, symbolical of the dead King, though occasionally a cod's head served the same purpose; a pike with a small fish in its mouth, symbolical of tyranny; and a boar's head, with an apple in its mouth, was the sign of bestiality. A

copy of Charles's book, "Ikon Basilike," was burned; an anthem of praise was sung for his execution; and the healths of those who had compassed it, were drunk from a calf's skull filled with wine.

Notorious among the clubs of the closing years of the seventeenth and early decades of the eighteenth century, were "the Mug House Clubs." A book by an unknown author, entitled "A Journey through England," gives the following description of his visit to one of these symposia.

"But the most diverting of all is the Mug House Club, in Long Acre. They have a grave old gentleman, in his own gray hairs, now within a few months of ninety years old, who is their President, and sits in an arm-chair, some steps higher than the rest of the company, to keep the whole room in order. A harp plays all the time at the lower end of the room; and every now and then, one or other of the company rises and entertains the rest with a song. Here is nothing drunk but ale, and every gentleman hath his separate mug, which he chalks on the table where he sits, as it is brought in, and everyone retires when he pleases, as in a coffee-room. The room is always so diverted with songs and drinking from one table to another to one another's health, there is no room for politics or anything than sour conversation. One must be there by seven to get room, and after ten the company are, for the most part, gone."

"The Mug" was supposed to represent the Earl of Shaftesbury, or "Ugly Mug," the Achitophel of Dryden's great satire, and the best hated man in England. So far, however, from these assemblies not being political, they became rabidly so in the time of William the Third.

In the reign of Anne there was a mania for clubs. Addison, in one of the early numbers of the "Spectator," gives an amusing sketch of the curious clubs of his time. He tells us that in a considerable market town was established a club of fat men; the room in which the meetings were held had two entrances, one by a door of moderate size, the other by a pair of folding doors; if a candidate could make his entrance through the first he was unqualified; but if he stuck in the passage, the folding doors were immediately thrown open for his reception, and he was hailed as a brother. Though the club consisted of only fifteen persons, it weighed three tons! In opposition to this society was the "Scarecrows or Skele-

tons," and such deadly strife arose between the two that it was found necessary each year to select one of the two magistrates from each of these clubs, so that they were coupled like rabbits—one fat, one lean. There were the "Humdrum" and the "Mum" Clubs, where the members sat together, smoked their pipes, and never spoke. These at least were harmless; not so the Duellists' Club, to which no one was admitted who had not fought his man. The President was said to have killed half-a-dozen in single combat, and other members took their seats according to the number of their slain. Of an even worse type was the "Mohock Club," long the terror of the London streets. The literature of the period abounds in references to these miscreants; but Steele gives the best account of them. After drinking themselves to a state of madness, they would sally forth into the streets and attack everyone they met. "Some," to quote our author's words, "are knocked down, others stabbed, others cut and carbonadoed. To put the watch to a total rout, and mortify some of those inoffensive militia is reckoned a 'coup d'état.' The particular talents by which these misanthropes are distinguished from one another, consist in the various kinds of barbarities which they execute upon their prisoners. Some are celebrated for a happy dexterity in tipping the lion upon them—which is performed by squeezing the nose flat to the face and boring out the eyes with their fingers; others are called the dancing-masters, and teach their scholars to cut capers by running swords through their legs; and a third sort, are the Tumblers, whose office it is to set women on their heads, and so on." Famous among the Queen Anne clubs was the Kit-Cat, held at a noted mutton-pie house in Shire Lane, Temple Bar—now covered by the New Law Courts. It was kept by one Christopher Cat, and originated in a weekly dinner given by the celebrated bookseller, Jacob Tonson, to literary men, as we are told in the following verses, written by one of the members, in which Jacob, spelt backwards, becomes Bocaj:

One night in seven, at this convenient seat,
Indulgent Bocaj did the Muses treat;
Their drink was gen'rous wine, and Kit-Cat's pyes
their meat,
Hence did the assembly's title first arise.
And Kit-Cat wits spring first from Kit-Cat pyes.

The great Duke of Marlborough, the first Earl of Dorset, the famous Lord Halifax, Sir Robert Walpole, Congreve, Gay, Steele, Addison, were all members. The club was afterwards removed to Barn

Elms. It was as much political as literary, only Whigs being admissible. In opposition to this was the October Club, entirely composed of Tory squires, so called from their drinking old October. It was held at the Bell Tavern, King Street, Westminster.

Most famous of all the curious clubs of the last century, was the "Beef Steak." There was more than one society that took its name from the favourite English dish. The first was held at a tavern in the Old Jewry. But the "Beef Steak" best known to posterity, was that founded by John Rich, the most celebrated of harlequins, and manager of Covent Garden Theatre, from its erection in 1733, to the time of his death.

The "Beef Steak" held its meetings in the Theatre until the house was burned down in 1808. After a short stay at the Bedford Coffee House, it was removed to the Lyceum, where it continued until its break-up in 1867. The members were strictly confined to twenty-four; even, when the Prince Regent was put up for admission, he had to wait his turn. The members met once a week to eat steaks, no other dish being allowed, and to drink old port. At the end of the dining-room was a large grating in the form of a gridiron, through which the fire was seen, and the steaks handed from the kitchen. Over this was inscribed a quotation from Macbeth:

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly.

A notable "steaker" was the Duke of Norfolk, of whose appetite the most extraordinary stories are told. He was known to eat six steaks at a sitting, his ordinary allowance being four; and he usually preceded these feeds by a little fish dinner, "just to get his stomach into play." It must have been a sight to see him with his silver gridiron, a badge worn by all, rubbing a clean plate with a shalot in front of the grating, waiting for his next.

During the hundred and odd years of this club's existence, there were few famous men who did not belong to it. Perfect equality reigned among the members; and the last made, even were he of Royal blood, was the fag of the rest.

A notorious association of the last century was the "Hell-fire Club," instituted by the eccentric Duke of Wharton; of a somewhat similar character was "The Monks of Medmenham," held under the presidency of

Sir Francis Dashwood, at his residence, Medmenham Abbey, formerly an ancient Cistercian Convent, situated on the banks of the Thames, not far from Taplow. The Monks were twelve in number, and included among others John Wilkes, the demagogue, and "the mysteries" they assembled to celebrate were blasphemous mockeries of the rites of the Roman Catholic Church.

The best description of this vile association is that given by Charles Johnstone, in his novel, "The Adventures of a Guinea." He tells how the most sacred rites of religion were burlesqued on the initiation of a novice, and how at supper time, dressed in their monkish garbs, "the members sat down to a banquet in the chapel in honour of the occasion, at which nothing the most refined luxury, the most lascivious imagination, could suggest to provoke and gratify appetite, was wanting, both the superiors and inferiors (who were permitted to take their places at the lower end of the table as soon as they had served the banquet), vying with each other in loose songs and dissertations of such gross lewdness and daring impiety as despair may be supposed to dictate to the damned."

The end of the last and the early years of the present century were fertile in curious clubs. There was one instituted by that notorious "roué," Lord Barrymore, known as "Hell-gate Barrymore," his two brothers being called—the one Cripplegate, on account of his lameness; and the other "Newgate," because it was said he had seen the inside of every prison in Europe; while his sister, on account, as Mrs. Malaprop says, of her "nice derangement of epitaphs," was well named "Billingsgate."

The club referred to was named "The Blue Bottle," or "The Humbug;" its meetings were held in a tavern under Covent Garden Piazza, and it was called "The Humbug," on account of the manner in which members were initiated. Two candidates were always introduced at the same time, and the point was to set them quarrelling as soon as they were seated. It did not matter how trivial might be the cause of difference, the members would take opposite sides, and exasperate the disputants to abuse, and sometimes blows. When matters grew serious, Barrymore would interfere and inform the victims that they had both been humbugged, and were consequently elected. He had long pressed Incledon, the celebrated singer, to become

a member, and when the latter consented, he had the honour to be proposed alone; but he did not thereby escape the usual penalty. He was called upon for a song, and rising commenced one of the most noted of his ballads, "Black-Eyed Susan." He had sung only the first line when a member called out, "Oh come, come, Charles, it's too bad to fool us like that." Inledon stopped and stared, but a chorus of voices bade him go on. "All in the Downs the fleet lay moor'd," again began the great tenor. "Inledon, remember you are singing to gentlemen, not to a Covent Garden gallery," interrupted a voice; this was followed by cries of "Shame, shame! Order, order!" Once more Inledon restrained himself and started again. But he was interrupted by hisses and cries of "You're drunk!" The singer could contain himself no longer, but throwing off his coat, threatened to thrash his tormentors within an inch of their lives. A roar of laughter and the cry of "Don't you know we are the Humbugs?" however, appeased his wrath, and he was declared duly elected.

Sometimes, however, the proposed members failed to see the joke when the explanation was rendered. "Is it humbugging us you've been?" cried a couple of Hibernians who had been introduced by a member; and off went their coats. But they were not so easily appeased as Inledon. A regular Donnybrook Fair row followed, during which bottles, chairs, candlesticks, and every portable article were used as missiles, until all had fled except Lord Barrymore and one of the Irishmen, who, with almost every shred of clothing torn off their backs, continued fighting among the ruins of glass, crockery, and furniture.

Another assembly patronised by his lordship was "The Two o'Clock," which did not meet until the hour named. It was held in one of the vilest rookeries of St. Giles's, and was chiefly composed of gentlemen of the road.

"The Everlasting" was a club the rule of which was that, night or day, the members were never to leave the room until some others came to relieve them, thus making the sitting perpetual.

A noted theatrical club in the days of Edmund Kean was "The Wolves," upon whose verdict the success or failure of every new actor depended.

A far more notable club was "The Owls," which was held at the Garrick's

Head, a tavern in Brydges Street, close to Drury Lane Theatre. The name is too suggestive to need explanation. There were about two hundred members—journalists, musicians, and actors. Kean, Sheridan Knowles, and Douglas Jerrold were among the number. Lemon Rede, the well-known playwright and journalist, was the "translator"—a very important office. Before a candidate was elected he had to explain to the meeting who and what he was, and in what way he could add to the amusement or edification of the society. Everything was done in the way of interruption and irrelevant questions to confuse the speaker, and render him incoherent; then up rose the "translator," who wittily perverted every word he had uttered, and made it a peg to hang jokes and personalities upon.

Douglas Jerrold was the acknowledged sponsor of many curious clubs. There was "The Mulberries," which met at the Wrekin, in Broad Court, Bow Street. The leading regulation of this club was that some paper, poem, or conceit touching upon Shakespeare, should be weekly contributed by some member, and these contributions were called "mulberry leaves." Among the earliest members were William Godwin, Kenny Meadows, and Lemon Blanchard. The title was afterwards changed to the Shakespeare Club, when Charles Dickens, Justice Talfourd, Macready, and Maclise belonged to it.

Jerrold also instituted "The Hooks and Eyes;" "Our Club;" "The Museum." But most curious of all was "The Zodiac;" this was essentially convivial: its members, limited to twelve, dined together once a month; and each member was named after a zodiacal sign. When the club was in solemn conversational and gastronomical conclave, it was imperative upon each present to address his brother constellation by his astronomical name under the penalty of one penny. The chairman at each meeting was the member who represented that sign of the Zodiac into which the sun had entered at the time.

A curious commentary is suggested upon the changes which have taken place in our manners during the last seventy years, when we note that a club called "The Eccentrics," to which Fox, Sheridan, Melbourne, and Brougham at different times belonged, a club which, during its existence, numbered no fewer than forty thousand members, all more or less distinguished men, held its

meetings at a tavern in Chandos Street, Covent Garden.

In these sober, monotonous days, curious clubs, and, indeed, specialist clubs, have almost ceased to exist; the old cosy gatherings of congenial spirits have swollen into a sort of subscription hotel, where one half the members are unknown to the other half. "The Garrick" is flooded by City men; and even "The Savage" admits people who have only the most hazy connection with literature, art, or the drama; the very idea of whose admission would have been scouted by the original founders.

BREWERS AND OTHERS.

THE falling leaves, and the last days of October, bring the brewers quite naturally upon the carpet. The brewers, and licensed victuallers, and kindred trades have their show at this time of the year; and, curiously enough, although the thing seems doubtful at the first breath, yet here is matter also attractive for the professional teetotaler, or, as he prefers to be called, the "abstainer." For the kindred trades include the mineral-water business. That there should be an alliance between beer and pop, other than shandygaff, for which it is not quite the season of the year, is certainly one of the signs of the times. The mineral-water van is becoming as universally evident in our streets as the brewer's dray—in the season of the year, that is—for, like the unfortunate abstainer who appeared before his time in the mellow old catch, "it falls when the leaves fall," and dies in October—that is to say, the van is laid up, and the horses go to the hammer, four-and-twenty or more in a string, "sound, useful mineral vanners," as they are styled in the auctioneers' catalogues when they appear at the mart in St. Martin's Lane or the Barbican.

All this betokens a change in public requirements. Strong and heavy drinks are going out of date with the strong heads which were able to withstand their potency. Like Cassio, the present generation has to confess that it has poor and unhappy brains for drinking. Hence the demand for a light and wholesome beverage, which is making itself felt in every branch of the trade. It is a demand, indeed, which is very imperfectly responded to. The light and wholesome ale which is really the beau ideal of a temperance beverage, and which quenches the thirst of a worker as nothing

else can quench it, is more often sought than found, thanks, in a great measure, to the trammels which fetter the trade—trammels of duties and licenses which effectually hinder the economical distribution of the national drink.

Brewing, however, is a matter that "passeth show." Its processes do not lend themselves readily to picturesque illustration. A field of golden barley is indeed a pleasant sight; but a row of malt-kilns, such as we may see at Newark or at Ware, have but a prosaic aspect. And delightful as we may find a hop garden in Kent, with its poles festooned and garlanded with luxuriant vines, and clustered with golden hops, with its baskets and bins, and groups of hop-pickers, yet, when the hops are pressed, and packed, and sent to the warehouse, there is no more question about them except as to prices current. Nor is there much of interest in brewers' vats, unless of a technical kind; and the mysteries of the trade promise no enthralling revelations to the outside public. Whether the method be that of London, of Dublin, or of Burton, the outward appearance of the process is pretty much the same. The vats, the steam, the drays, the casks, the rich odours, and all prevailing beeriness are there.

But a glance at the Brewers' Exhibitions shows us that if the brewer has not much to show, he has a good deal to see; while an outsider may well be astonished at the number of trades and professions which minister to the wants of the brewer; if he be also a maltster, so much the better. There are brewers' architects to erect his buildings; skilled geologists to advise him as to his wells and springs, for it is evident that good water is at the root of good beer, and a degree more or less of hardness or softness may make all the difference, between the making of a colossal fortune, or the filing of a petition in bankruptcy; then there are well-sinkers to carry out the practical part of the water problem, and engineers with pumps and cisterns; others are ready with barley washers and barley graders, with steeping cisterns, and with valves of all kinds and fittings for the same. Then there are malt roasters and malt screens, and, indeed, everything the maltster can want—his barrows, his casks, his huge shovels, his hoveltops, down to brooms, and mops, and list slippers, with the various apparatus of delicate tests of quality and temperature, which go to furnish forth the complete maltster.

Then, where the brewer's part of the business begins, how many skilful engineers are planning for his custom, with polished brass and shining steel; with vats and coppers; with heaters and coolers; with pumps rotary and otherwise; with machines for his mashes, for his worts, for his yeast; with all kinds of instruments, fittings, and tacklings—all of which employ a whole army of special workmen, of special engineers, plumbers, fitters, and other artificers!

Then, there are casks—a serious matter this for brewers. Casks turn the brewer's manager into a grey-headed, care-worn man before his time—casks which are always going astray, and coming home in a battered and dissolute condition, which roll about in railway sidings and are pitched heedlessly into trucks, or rolled over ships' sides and sent bounding down the hatchways, and which, generally, are a trouble and despair to their possessors. Well, here are cask makers, who turn out staves, and hoops, and heads by the hundred dozen; and cask doctors, who will reform the most disreputable of casks. And when you have got your casks and filled them, here are the drays to carry them off—for we have brewers' coach-builders, too—and sledges, and hand-spikes, and all that a drayman's heart can desire.

In the train of the brewer comes the licensed victualler; and with him appear the restaurant keeper, the club manager, and others of the kind, who all assume the generic name of "caterers," and have their own class journals, and form a kind of guild to themselves. These last are the real "victuallars" of society; for those who possess the title are chiefly concerned about drinkables. For the requirements of the actual publican a whole host of purveyors are in evidence. For him beer engines shine in gilding and enamel; wonderful tills receive the takings of the skilful barmen and barmaids behind the expanse of polished counters, exhibit the amount of each transaction, and add up the whole without the intervention of living ready-reckoner. The very show cards and tablets that adorn the walls of bars and restaurants, have an important trade to themselves. And then, what mountains of glasses, of jugs, and of crockery, represent the wants of the allied members of the victualling department! One great change, indeed, has come over the ways of the London publican. The pewter pot is going out of fashion, along with the porter

that harmonised so well with the vessel that contained it. The London artisan, the cabman, all the great under world of the metropolis, have abandoned the once favoured porter, and have taken to ale. It is something like a social revolution; and the end of it is not yet in sight.

But there is one great subject in which everybody takes an interest. The publican, although, perhaps, he might prefer a more robust taste among his clients, is a customer on an extensive scale to the mineral-water manufacturer. And everybody knows how universal is the demand at the first symptom of summer heat for aerated drinks. This last is the title more scientifically accurate; for, as for mineral waters, but an infinitesimal proportion contain any trace of mineral salts. The soda water of general use is simply water, more or less pure, impregnated with carbonic acid gas. And as far as the public health is concerned, this is probably a happy circumstance. Then the flavour of lemonade is derived chiefly from citric acid; while various essences, derived by the chemist from all kinds of unsuspected sources, give a distinguishing flavour to a variety of so-called temperance drinks.

If casks form the subject of corroding care to the brewer, so do bottles for the mineral-water manufacturer. And bottles of all kinds were on show in wonderful variety at the Brewers' Exhibition. It is now, perhaps, nearly twenty years since the mineral-water bottle assumed a new development, and the stopper—for the first time probably from the beginning of the world—took an inside place. Now the favourite model is a ball-stopper, imprisoned within the neck of the bottle, and forced, by the liberated gas, against an india-rubber ring in the bottle's mouth.

Formerly it was customary to demand a deposit from private customers to ensure the due return of bottles; but the severe competition among manufacturers has led to the general abolition—in London, anyhow—of the deposit system. The change is good for the bottle manufacturer, no doubt; and has led to a considerable increase of consumption in aerated drinks; but a large stock of bottles accumulate in private hands, and find their way back to their owners very slowly, with many breakages on the way.

These breakages are increased, too, by the circumstance that the ball-stoppers are valuable to little boys as marbles, and can be exchanged against two "stoneys," or,

sometimes four; and as there is no way of getting at them except by breaking the bottles—well, sometimes there are casualties among them. The india-rubber rings, too, which are moveable, are utilised by boyish ingenuity; happily, for the public weal, they are not elastic enough for catapults.

But, anyhow, we have a wonderful supply of mechanical contrivances for the use of the mineral-water manufacturer. There are steam bottling machines, which will fill sixty or seventy dozen of bottles in an hour, all in an automatic way. The aerated water is passed from the cylinder where it is charged with gas under strong pressure; it is forced, in the exact quantity required, into the bottles, which have been already automatically charged with the particular flavouring required. The bottles are reversed, the stopper falls into its place, it slides down into the case prepared for its reception. In a few minutes from the time the empty bottle starts on its course, it may be travelling with thousands of others on its mission to relieve the thirst of panting London. The demand for these wares is as sudden and unexpected as the changes of our variable climate; and every contrivance for speed and the saving of manual labour is eagerly adopted.

Bottle-washing machines are a great feature of the annual show, where bottles are first rinsed in rotary cages, cleaned with revolving brushes, drained, and turned back into their cases with marvellous speed.

Even the wooden cases, holding their two dozen bottles each, are the objects of a considerable trade, and, with van boxes, rail cases, crates, travelling cases, and other packages, make a considerable show for the benefit of native industry.

Allied with the maker of mineral waters is the distiller and preparer of essences—which go to make the various fancy beverages known as Ginger Ale, Ginger Champagne, Temperance Cider, with many others. And just as the connoisseur over his bottle of Clicquot, Mumm, or Perrier Jouet dwells upon the points which characterise his favourite beverage, so with a little make-believe we may relish our bottle of English Moselle or Anglo-Burgundy. The points of excellence upon which we may dwell are set forth in the schedule of a competition for prize medals for fancy aerated beverages, just held at the Brewers' Exhibition. First of all there is the general appearance of the bottled drink, its clearness, colour, etc.; then the opening out-

burst, vivid enough to excite the expectations of the toper; taste and bouquet naturally count for most, and must include "elegance and aroma;" continued effervescence counts for something; and finally the "foam head" is to be remarked—"the frothiest not necessarily the best," for the froth is sometimes the result of a special preparation known as American gum.

Nor is the ingenuity of the purveyor of non-exciseable drinks confined to the cool and sparkling products appropriate to summer. Winter cordials are ready for the cold weather. There are Cloves, Elderette, Tettle, Gingerette, Ginger Gin, Ginger Punch, Hot Tom Bitters, Peppermint Cordial, and a special new drink to be known as G.A., over all which we may be as sociable and jovial as we please, without danger of undue excitement.

MONTHEROND.

AN OUT-OF-THE-WAY STORY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

THE strange pastor's sermon had a decided success with the inhabitants of Montherond, who, although an extremely rustic congregation, had such very marked views in the matter of theology, that it was not altogether easy to satisfy them. There was, however, in the fine, clear features, the sympathetic voice, and general bearing of Monsieur Vernier something which would have given interest to a less eloquent discourse, and charmed a more critical audience. "He must have a power of learning," commented Pierre Cruchon to his friend Etienne Lannes, as they entered the inn together after service. "He said some fine words this morning, that one did."

"It's more than learning that came from his lips, Pierre," replied the other. "It was a deal more out of his heart than out of his head, I thought; and, by the way he spoke, and by the look of his face, I'll venture to say he has had a sight of trouble. He's none that old, and yet his hair is as grey as your father's."

"It's more likely that it's his book-learning, and his Greek, and what not, that has wrinkled his forehead and whitened his hair. Why, think what you and me would have been by this time if we had sat stewing over reading, writing, and thinking the best part of our days and nights, instead of filling our lungs with wholesome forest air, and going to bed with the birds!"

"That isn't what I mean, Pierre," persisted the other. He felt a little piqued that his physiognomical insight had called forth so little approbation. "What I mean is clear to me, if you can't see it. Look at him now, as he comes into the room. Tell me that isn't a man grown old before his time with trouble! Learning be hanged! A man chooses a trade because it comes natural to his gifts; and, to them that's fitted for thinking, it's no more wearing, nor so much, perhaps, as farming and foresting is to you and me."

"Well, well; we won't argue," replied Pierre. "Let it be as you say. It strikes me that there's trouble for everyone; and we get our share with the farming as well as he does with his book-learning. Look at our lad, Pierre Maurice. He's a nice handful for his parents, isn't he?"

Lannes shook his head.

"It runs in your family, Pierre, to make up their minds without further opinion asked or required. Pierre Maurice is a chip of the old block."

"Oh, well, I'm ready to confess that I can judge of my own concerns without anyone's help, and that I can stick to my word when I've passed it, if that's any reproach to me; and, if the lad only took after me and the old man in so far as that, I shouldn't find any fault with him. It's his folly that angers me. I couldn't have believed that his mother's son would have been such a senseless creature. If you'd only heard him, before church, vowing he'd never marry any woman but old Blanc's bastard granddaughter, a girl that has been brought up on charity in this house."

"It's a bad business," replied Lannes; "but it might be worse."

"Might it, indeed?" cried the father. "Suppose it was your son who was throwing away the chance of a nice dowry with his wife, how would you talk then?"

"Much the same as you do, I don't doubt," returned Lannes philosophically. "We are all ready enough to make an outcry over spilt milk."

"And about Elise?" went on his companion; "suppose she's set her heart on him."

"She'll have been a silly girl if she has, seeing it has always been plain to everyone that Pierre Maurice was not to be had for the setting of her heart on him. But look you here, if you aren't hungry, I am, and there's your father beckoning you to go up, and carve for the gentlemen."

Pierre Cruchon did not look much

inclined to exert himself to play the host as he marched to the head of the long table, and took his place between the Pastor of Montherond and the stranger who had preached. After a curt greeting, he carved in silence, bestowing all his attention on the huge joint of veal before him. The two pastors talked together across the table.

"Just the spot for a philosopher or a hermit to choose," the guest was saying. "As we drove over the bridge before service, I experienced a more solemn impression than I can describe. The lonely road brought us so suddenly on to the group of buildings—there in the solitude, it was like an allegory in stone. The whole life of one of these honest woodland souls seemed to pass before me. The church, the inn, the rough ball-room, the blackened mill-wheel, the stream rushing past them all. You must have purposely left me unprepared for the multitude of suggestions that Montherond had in store for me."

"Not in the very least, my dear Vernier," replied the other. "I have known Montherond, myself, from my earliest childhood, and I have always taken it as a matter of course. It may sound barbarous to say that, when I had described my church to you as shut in by forest, and told you that we were to dine at an old inn close by, I felt I had exhausted the subject."

"It is just as well, nay, better. I am glad that no preconceived picture was in my mind, to blur the sharp, clear outline that fixed itself there at once. I am afraid I shall sound like a sentimentalist if I say that I immediately resolved to stay a few days at Montherond, instead of returning home to-night, if I could prevail on the good landlord to find me a bed, and the other necessities of life."

"We shall feel infinitely honoured, Monsieur," said Cruchon, his face brightening at this praise of his "home." "Of course, we are but plain folks in our way; but we shall make the best of what we have, in your honour. We've kept this inn from father to son, no one knows how long, and we're proud to entertain anyone who praises the beauty of Montherond."

"By the way, Pierre," interrupted Pastor Lombard, "talking of father and son reminds me, where is Pierre Maurice? He wasn't at church, and I don't see him in the room. Surely at Whitsuntide he shouldn't be absent."

"He shouldn't, Monsieur le Pasteur," replied Cruchon, the gloom returning to his face; "if I'd had my way, he wouldn't be absent neither."

"Do you often have visitors at Montherond?" asked Monsieur Vernier, making an attempt to dismiss an evidently unpleasant topic of conversation.

"Not very often," replied Monsieur Lombard; then returning to the charge, he pursued, "And where is your son then? As I drove Mr. Vernier here this morning we passed him not far away. He was in his church-going clothes. What has become of him?"

"He's gone back to La Criblerie, I dare say," answered Cruchon, in a surly tone.

"Back to La Criblerie!" echoed the Pastor. "Why should he do that?"

"Why should Pierre Maurice go back to La Criblerie?" answered Madame Cruchon for her husband, as with an angry sniff she handed the asparagus to Monsieur Vernier; "for the same reason, Monsieur le Pasteur, that I am waiting at table to-day instead of Verena Blanc. I can change plates as well as most folks, but that isn't altogether why I am doing it on Whitsunday instead of sitting down to table."

"Dear me, dear me!" exclaimed Monsieur Lombard, "you don't mean that?"

"Well, Monsieur le Pasteur, this is what I mean," broke forth Madame Cruchon in angry tones, which rose above the buzz of conversation. "I mean that some girls have no gratitude in them and no sense of modesty. She's led that poor lad out of all notions of respect for us, and now she has locked herself up in the attic, and says she will leave here to-day. I'm sure I shall be glad when the place is quit of her. We don't want the story of her mother over again with our poor lad's name mixed up, true or false, in the disgrace."

"Dear, dear," said the Pastor again, shaking his head. "I'm afraid Pierre Maurice is an obstinate young fellow. I talked to him for an hour when you complained of him before, and I thought he'd have listened to reason and remonstrance."

"He'll listen to nothing," interposed the father angrily, "perhaps, if we'd not opposed him at the first, he'd never have carried the matter with so high a hand. I was for letting him alone, myself—lads will be lads, you know—but the women would get spying, and tattling, and making the worst of it. His mother has only herself to thank that it has come to this to-day."

"Mon Dieu," cried his wife, forgetting everything in her indignation at this new light thrown on the subject. "Thou nincompoop! Then if thou hadst seen what I saw in the stable this morning thou wouldst have gone quietly back to the kitchen and said nothing; and then thou wouldst have cried out louder than anyone when the story had come to the only end it could come to. It's the worst day's work your mother ever did when she thought to pay off that 'vaurien's' score by taking old Blanc's grandchild into the house."

"The mother may have been mistaken, no doubt; but this I do know, that Verena would have given our Pierre Maurice his dismissal long ago, if she'd been well let alone."

"Umph," retorted his wife, "then I suppose if she makes him marry her, you'll expect me to be glad of my daughter-in-law?"

"Confound the women!" cried Cruchon in despair. "They are enough to drive a man out of his senses; while as to the lad, —but," he added, stopping short in his invectives, "I beg your pardon, gentlemen, I forgot I was getting angry before you, my head is so full of this trouble, it will come out."

"Poor Cruchon!" said Monsieur Lombard sympathisingly. "I'm afraid it's a bad business. You see, Vernier, his eldest son is behaving very inconsiderately and obstinately about a girl who lives as servant in this house, and whom he really ought not to think of marrying. She is rather a coquette, and her parents were a very worthless couple; she is also quite penniless. We have all reasoned with him before this; but now, it appears, he has pushed the matter to open rebellion. It is a terrible pity for the whole family. Perhaps a word from you might avail where the appeals of those with whom he is more familiar have failed."

"Let anyone take him in hand who will," interposed Cruchon. "All I can say is that he'll soon find which is the stronger of us two. I have other sons, and if I can't bend his will, I'll make such an example of him that the others, at least, shall learn submission."

Monsieur Vernier looked from one to the other. "I will tell you a story," he said, "of which your words remind me vividly. It happened long ago; but human nature remains human nature, though the generations pass away one

after another. There was once, my good Monsieur Cruchon, a rich and prosperous father, who was not, as you are, blessed with several sons. He had only one, and that one was to him as the apple of his eye. The man I speak of was proud and overbearing, one who could not bear the least opposition to his commands and desires. As the cherished one grew up, he developed a character just as obstinate as his father's; while the over-indulgence of his childhood had made self-restraint or prudence of conduct almost an impossibility to him. When the lad was about twenty, he—like your Pierre Maurice—became deeply attached to a girl far below him in station, but whom, nevertheless, he wished to make his wife. As you may suppose, his father, on whom the boy was dependent, refused his consent to the marriage absolutely and in great anger. Just as absolutely and angrily the son declared that he would redeem the promise he had given to the girl he loved. It was not the first conflict that had arisen between the father and son; but it was the fiercest and the last. He left the house with his father's curse, and he never entered it again."

"And what became of him?" asked Madame Cruchon, as Monsieur Vernier's voice sank tremulously to silence. "Did he marry the girl?"

"That I cannot tell you," replied Monsieur Vernier huskily. "It was some years before the father so far relented as to make any attempt to find out what had become of his son. When at last he did so, all trace of the lad had disappeared. In his sudden anger, too, at the time he heard his son's story, he had paid no attention to the names which were mentioned in it. It was in vain that he racked his memory to recall them; nor could he gather any information among such of his son's friends as he communicated with. For years he hoped and watched for a word from the wanderer; but none came. He grew old before his time; and his whole life has been one long repentance for a deed which no repentance can make good."

"Poor soul!" said Madame Cruchon, deeply interested. "I suppose you think it might be like that with Pierre Maurice; but, Monsieur le Pasteur, we never over-indulged him in his childhood, so the case isn't quite the same."

"That is possible," he replied with a faint smile. "It is not easy to see all the rights and wrongs until the years have aligned away and made them irrevocable."

Then, absently, he pushed his chair from the table and went out of the room into the forest.

"It must have been his own son," murmured Cruchon to himself. "It isn't the book learning after all that has whitened his hair."

The long, busy summer day had worn away to evening. The dancers had gathered in the rustic ball-room. The candles were flickering and guttering in their tin sconces as the wind eddied in fitful gusts through the open sides of the building. There was an uncertain shifting of light and shade on the hot merry faces of the couples as they swung round with all the energy they could command, or stood arm-in-arm waiting for breath to recommence their exertions. The musicians, in the funny little stall which served as an orchestra, were scraping and blowing their gayest tunes, and the clang of the music, the heavy beat of the thick shoes on the boards, and the hum of a hundred voices, spread far out into the forest and told a tale of festivity to the echoes.

François Thalamy, in his house by the stream, heard it without hearing. He had not been to the dances for more than twenty years.

To Verena, in her little slant-roofed attic, it brought a fresh pang of bitterness after her day of dreary solitude and reflection. She wondered if Pierre Maurice were there, dancing to drive away the thought of what she had said in the morning. She had been very angry when she said it; but she had not spoken a word which she wished to recall. It would be hard to go; but it would be much better for every one that she should go and try to forget and hope to be forgotten. Her conscience was quite clear on this point; it only reproached her for having sat idle all this busy day, while her share of work had fallen on other shoulders. She had finished her preparations for leaving Monthérond; she had not many things to carry away. All her belongings made no more than a light burden for her strong young arms. She had one or two treasures which she could stow away in the bosom of her dress, and then she was ready to steal out in the twilight without one farewell word, never to return. There was a tiny purse which Pierre Maurice had given her long ago, when they were both children. It was his first gift. She would leave all his other little keepsakes be-

hind her. In the purse there was a five-franc piece, which a rich traveller had once given her, and which Madame Cruchon had allowed her to keep. She had been so proud of it that she had polished it till it shone like looking-glass. Then there were her mother's long silver ear-rings and the buckles which François had given her; and lastly, she took from her treasury a small faded photograph of a young man who wore a student's cap with some Alpine roses fastened in the band. It was difficult to judge what this young man was really like; but Verena knew well that he had large, merry eyes and a fine mouth, which looked as if it loved to laugh. She held the portrait in her hand and pored over it for a time with an expression of bitter reproach on her face. Her own troubles, the struggle of renunciation that she was passing through, lay heavily upon her. This happy-faced student was responsible for so much that made her life hard and unhappy; his sins had been visited so often on her, and had cut her off so relentlessly from all her best hopes, that she would not have been a woman if she had not chafed at the gay carelessness of this unknown father.

"Ah," she thought, "why did you never come back and do what you could to make it all straight? You could never have thought what you were doing and what you were leaving undone."

Her heart cried out the thought so loud that it seemed like a voice from among the tops of the dark trees. She laid her hand over the likeness, and raised her head, but she could still see the mocking smile and the bunch of flowers in the jaunty little cap. She closed her eyes to shut it out, and leaned her face against the window. Outside there was a sound of rising wind, and the clouds were driving low.

On a sudden a strange dream seemed to float through the room. A sense of terrible suspense, an anguish of expectancy overtook her. She could not stir, nor cry out. Then slowly the horrible vision grew more definite. It was as if she saw a raging flood and the white face of a corpse, now rising, now sinking, but never clearly visible, in the turmoil of the water; until it faded and left her trembling and breathless.

"Oh, how frightful!" she said, shuddering when she opened her eyes again. "Could I have slept standing up?"

Then she put the photograph with the purse and the buckles, and took up her

bundle. It was quite dark enough to make a start; the dancing was at its height; no one would see her or hear her, perhaps no one would miss her—unless perhaps Pierre Maurice; and a big tear trickled down her cheek. She was afraid, though, that Pierre Maurice had been cowardly, he was so much afraid of his mother. She would cry for him no more. She loved him, and never would love anyone else so dearly; but she would give him up. In years to come, when she would be an old woman, she would come back to Montherond; he would be master of the inn, and Lannes' Elise would perhaps be mistress, or perhaps some other; they would not recognise her, and she would kiss his children and tell them how she had once been a child there. So she thought as she stole down the broad oak staircase and along the wide dusky passages that she knew so well. As she passed the guest-chamber she saw through the open door a tall, white-haired man sitting by the window. She saw him again as she turned in front of the inn to take a farewell look at the grey gables against the cloudy evening sky.

She had decided to take the road to Lausanne—up the hill between the trees; she was not afraid of the dark lonely walk. Yet contrary to her decision she went past the dancing room, over the bridge, and along the rocky road beside the stream to the mill. A light shone through the small lozenge-shaped panes of the window. Verena wondered at herself as she found herself knocking softly at the door.

"I am come to say good-bye to you, François, before I go away," she said, when she had opened it and taken a step into the small dingy dwelling-room. Thalamy was sitting in his chimney-corner, half-dozing over his pipe. He woke with a start as the candle flickered in the rush of air that followed the opening of the door.

"Ah, Verena, it is you—what did you say?" he asked. "Only just shut the door and come in, the wind will leave us in the dark else."

Verena did as she was bid, and came towards him. "I said I was come to bid you good-bye before I leave here," she repeated.

"Good-bye!" echoed Thalamy. "Why in the name of all things have you come to say good-bye?"

"I don't know," replied the girl, naïvely. "I had thought of going without saying a word of farewell. But somehow I couldn't help coming to you."

"What is the child talking of?" he cried testily. "Is this some nonsense you have been getting up at the dance? I call it a very poor sort of trick to try and play me!"

"It isn't a joke or a trick, François. I am sorry I came, now. To-morrow, when you hear all about it from the Cruchons, you will believe me. See, here is my bundle; there is nothing belonging to me left under their roof."

"Verena," cried the man, with a look of despair, "what has happened? What will become of you if the Cruchons turn you adrift?"

"The Cruchons haven't turned me adrift," she answered proudly; "I am going of my own will. And as to what will become of me, I am a strong girl, and well able to work. I shall not starve."

"But you have no friends! Whom have you anywhere but here? You cannot go unprovided for among strangers; you would have to beg for charity. Wait here a few days with me, and I will talk to the mistress of the Châlet à Gobet. She always takes some extra hands in the summer time."

"No, François," replied the girl firmly; "I will not go to the châlet, nor to any other place of which you can tell me. It is my intention to find a place among strangers, where no one knows anything of me, and where, if I am a good, industrious girl, no one can reproach me with my parents, and where no one from here can come and find me."

"No one?" repeated François. "Not even Pierre Maurice?"

"No one," replied Verena. Her voice quivered now. "Pierre Maurice least of all."

"Ah, I see," he said slowly. "His mother has been too much for him; I guessed she would be some day or other. Then it is to be all over between you and him?"

"Yes," she said, trying to say it steadily; "yes, it's all over between us."

For a moment he did not speak. Verena stood between the table and the door, longing to be away, and more than half regretting the impulse which had brought her. The wind filled the silence by whistling dolefully down the chimney.

"Well, good-bye, François," she said at last. "I mustn't stand here any longer."

Thalamy shook his head as she stretched out her hand towards him.

"It won't do for you to go to-night, child," he said slowly. "Do you hear that wind? Have you lived so long at Montherond, without knowing what it means? It has been growling like that ever since sunset; the storm must be close upon us. You must go back to Cruchon's, Verena, and, when you are there, think it all over once again, and see if you and Madame Pierre can't make it right."

"That's out of the question, François," she answered determinedly. "Tempest or no tempest, I will abide by what I have planned to do. I might have been a kilometre or more on my way now if it hadn't been for coming to see you."

"But, my girl," he cried anxiously, "you are beside yourself! Think what a storm in the forest means—a storm in the night! Think of the black darkness, of the blinding lightning, of the crashing thunder, of the driving rain! Think of the danger of missing your way among the crossing paths in the confusion and darkness; think of the falling trees and the swollen streams—all the dangers which will be above your head and beneath your feet—and do not tempt Providence by venturing across the forest to-night, when the wind has raised its voice to warn you of the risk you will run!"

"You don't frighten me, François," she said in the same determined voice. "And even if the worst came to the worst, I can die but once. Good-bye—you have been very kind to me. You will think of me, sometimes, and stand up for me when you hear them speak badly of me. Good-bye."

There was a mist of tears before her eyes; she did not think it would have been so hard to part with François. Her hand was on the latch as she spoke; she had barely lifted it when the wind burst it open with an angry howl; the noise of the water over the weir was cruel and ominous. She paused on the threshold that the gust might sweep by; and as she paused, looking out into the prematurely gathering darkness, that same nameless dread returned to her; she saw once again the raging torrent of her strange vision, and the white face rising and sinking on the tossing waves. With all her might, she strained her eyes to see the features of that troubled corpse. Just as in a dream a thought creates an event, so in answer to her desire, the dead face rose upward, and was, for a moment, clearly visible to her. The eyes were wide open, the mouth wore a smile. The hair clustered under the hand

of a little red cap, in which was pinned a few rosy blossoms. She had seen those features before; she knew the look in those eyes; the smile was familiar to her; the blossoms in the red cap were Alpine roses. She threw up her hands with a loud shriek, and then turned round on her companion.

"Did you see him, too?" she asked, her eyes full of horror. "Did you see him there just by the weir?"

"Whom do you mean? I saw nothing. You would be clever to see anyone in this darkness. Who did you think was there?"

"I did not fancy it," she went on positively. "It was my father, just as he is in the likeness which my mother had—the same smile, the same look in his eyes, only stiff and white in the stream, and the water was high as if the storm was already over."

"Verena," cried Thalamy, in great terror, "what do you mean? What are you talking of? Who bade you come to me with this story? You are doing it to force something from me. You talk of a dead man floating along the stream, how can I tell who he is? Why should I know more than another?"

His manner was wildly excited, far more excited than Verena's own, when a few moments ago her straining eyes had gazed into the mysterious darkness which lay between her and the tall rocks opposite. His agitation seemed to calm hers, but a strange look of intelligence shone in her face as she stepped close up to her companion and laid her hand on his arm.

"François," she said, "you have kept your secret well, yet I have read it, looking backwards through all these years, through all these dreary days and nights, and winters and summers. I know now why my father never came to keep his troth with my mother, and to clear his name at Montherond. I know now why I have had to bear a load of disgrace all my life, and to work for nothing. I know all now, and you have known it all along. You hated him, and you——"

"Verena, Verena," he cried, pushing her from him, "do not say that word—do not go on so. I did not kill him—I did not bring him to his death. He was the ruin of her life and of mine; but I never raised my hand against him, believe me when I tell you so. Do not call me your father's murderer, Verena; I cannot bear it." His face was pale and his eyes big with terror, as he clasped his trembling hands as if to implore for mercy.

The storm had broken at last; the dancers were hurriedly dispersing in groups; the last guttering candle in the ball-room had been extinguished by the flood of rain. The wind rushed once more in at Thalamy's door and left the room in darkness. Then a blinding flash of lightning encircled Verena and her companion, and the pealing thunder rolled close over their heads. A second flash, after a few seconds' darkness, showed Verena that François was lying senseless at her feet. It was too dreadful to bear, though she was strong and brave; in a moment she was outside, fighting her way back to the inn. She found the front door shut, but from the window of the guest chamber the strange pastor was watching the storm.

"I am come for help," she shouted. "I beg some one to come at once to François at the mill. I fear the storm has struck him; I have left him lying as if he were dead. Will some one come back with me? Oh, please, some one come quickly."

But Monsieur Vernier was the only person who heard or who was at liberty to answer her appeal. Old Monsieur Cruchon and his son had gone to see that the horses were safely tied in case of mishaps during the storm; the two women were in the secret recesses of the store closets carefully putting away the best dinner service which had been taken out for the occasion. After calling once or twice to give the alarm, Monsieur Vernier joined Verena outside.

"I will come with you and be of whatever help I can," he said, "let us hurry, lest delay should be fatal."

"Lay your hand on my shoulder, sir," said Verena. "I will guide you; you will hardly keep your footing if you do not."

He did as she bade him. "Are you his daughter?" he asked, as they struggled along against the wind.

"No," answered Verena, "he has no children, no one belonging to him."

"Were you with him when it happened, or did you find him lying as you say?"

"I was with him."

"Ah, you live with him?"

"No," replied Verena, simply. "I am—I mean I used to be servant at Cruchon's but to night I have left them. I had gone to say good-bye to François."

Monsieur Vernier felt a shudder run through the girl's frame. It did not surprise him, for the rain had drenched her and the lightning played incessantly across the rolling clouds. When they reached the mill, it was still in darkness. They

went in, and Verena closed the door behind them, and began to grope for a light. While she was finding it, Monsieur Vernier heard the sound of broken sobs and moans. "He is not dead," he whispered, "perhaps it is nothing more than a terrible fright."

By the light of the rekindled candle they saw François Thalamy just where he had fallen, his head between his hands, the picture of despair.

"François," said Verena, and to Monsieur Vernier's astonishment her voice was harsh and cold, "I was afraid the lightning had killed you, and that I should never hear the truth of the story after all."

He only answered by a moan.

"Are you hurt?" asked Monsieur Vernier, repelled by the girl's words. "Let me help you to get up for a moment that we may see how you are."

"No, no," he moaned, "leave me alone. What have I done that this should come upon me after all these years and years?"

"It does not matter," said Verena obdurately, "how many years it may be. I shall not leave your house this night till you have told me all there is to tell."

"My child," said the Pastor reprovingly, looking from the crouching figure of the man to the tall, commanding girl who stood opposite to him with threatening eyes, "why do you speak so to a fellow-creature who has just escaped from the jaws of death? Have you no thankfulness, no pity? Your words sound strangely out of place."

"Yes, Monsieur, yes, Monsieur," began François eagerly. "Bid her leave me; she said she was going away, let her go. The storm will soon be over; she knows the way through the forest so well, she will not miss it. Bid her go at once."

"No, no, François, I am not going yet, though I was in a hurry a little while ago. I will not stir from here till I know why my father's face came dead and cold to look at me before I left Montherond for ever. I can guess what your story will be—one of hatred and revenge; but you shall tell it me yourself. I thought you were my best friend for so long, and yet——"

Her voice died away in husky anguish.

"My friend," said Monsieur Vernier, addressing Thalamy, "I do not, of course, understand exactly what the suspicion is which rests upon you, nor how it has come so to rest. I see plainly that you are going through a cruel struggle, and I adjure you here and now to keep silence no longer."

"Verena!" cried the poor man, raising himself and wringing his hands, "Verena, he did come floating down the stream as you say you saw his wraith float to-night. It was the morning after a great storm had flooded the valley. I saw him rising and sinking in the muddy water; but how he came there I cannot tell. He must have lost his way in the storm and wandered about until, in the darkness, he missed his footing and was carried away by the brook. He did not die by my hand. I found him early in the morning beside the weir. I said to myself: 'Ah, Verena Blanc will watch a long time for her fine lover to come back from Yverdon with his father's consent to marry her.' When I took the body out of the water I saw that the head was cut and bruised at the back. He must have fallen against a rock. I took the body and laid it in the house, there, in that corner; and, if it had not been for the wound on the head, I would have gone and called someone. I feared that, as I hated him and loved Verena, it might be thought I had killed him. The longer I thought of this the more I feared. Besides, he was dead; he could not give his father's message, nor set Verena's name right. I looked in his pocket to see if he had brought the money for Cruchon. There were only a couple of francs—nothing more. What was the use of making a fuss? He had come back empty-handed. I let him lie here all day, and at night I buried him above the weir. I hoped that when your mother saw he would never come back, that she would let me marry her; but it was not to be so. I did not think she would die. It was too late to tell when she had died. That is all. You will say hard things of me, but I have done no crime, and I deserve no punishment. I buried his two francs with him. It would have been best if I could have taken my secret down with me to the grave."

"Thank God you did not. It is at least something to know that he was not so black a traitor as I have heard him called. Ah, François! you have been crueller to me than any of them. Who knows what might have happened if you had not been the one to find his body?"

"Verena," said Monsieur Vernier, "will you tell me the rest of the story? It is a terribly sad story. I want to understand how it all came about."

"I can tell you so little, sir," replied the girl bitterly. "All I know is, that he was a student from Lausanne, and that

they called him René. My mother was younger than I am now; she broke her heart because he never came back to marry her. I do not often think about it, except when Madame Cruchon tells me I am the child of a 'vaurien'; but to-day I have thought of it all day, because of—of something of which I cannot speak; and to-night, as if between waking and sleeping, I saw him floating down the water to the mill weir. I knew his face by an old likeness. Perhaps it would have been all the same if François had told all this long ago; we cannot tell." As she spoke, she drew the little picture out and looked at it. "It was very cruel," she said, "who knows what unspoken words died upon his lips?"

Monsieur Vernier had come close to her, and was looking at the picture too. Once or twice his lips parted as if to speak; but no words came.

"Verena," he said at last with a great effort, "will you give that photograph into my hands for a moment? I think it is the picture of—of some one I knew well."

She gave it to him wonderingly.

"You know nothing of him, my child, except that his name was René; and that he had a father whose anger he dreaded?"

"Nothing, Monsieur, nothing; but you—can you tell me more?"

"Yes," he replied, in a voice that shook with agitation, "I can tell you all there is to tell. He was my son, my only one. I have found him at last, and you must fill his place as best you can; and forgive me for him. Come, my child, let us go back to the inn. I told those good people the first part of the story at dinner-time; they shall hear the end of it now."

"Verena," cried François, "I am a poor lonely old man, surely you will forgive me now that you are going to be happy."

And he did not ask in vain.

There was great astonishment and uplifting of the hands that night in the inn of Montherond, and the girl who had been about to creep away in the darkness homeless and friendless was made much of and treated with a consideration to which all her life long she had been a stranger. Even Madame Pierre seemed anxious to make amends for over-harshness in the past; and she was the one to say when Monsieur Vernier wished to settle, at last, his son's long-standing bill: "Nay, Monsieur, Verena has worked all that off amply. It was something over three hundred francs, and she has been here six years."

So when Verena left Montherond with her grandfather, she and the Cruchons were the best of friends, and Pierre Maurice, radiant in his newly-established happiness, drove them to Lausanne in the best spring-cart. They were to be man and wife as soon as Verena's "corbeille" could be got ready; yet before she came back to Montherond as a bride, her mother's old lover had been laid in the woodland graveyard, and the babbling brook was doing its best to tell him that his successor—the distant cousin—with a view to improving the small property he had inherited, was rebuilding the saw-mill from its very foundations.

POOR FOLK.

A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

By the Author of "*David Ward*," "*The Story of a Sorrow*," "*A Dreadful Mésalliance*," etc. etc.

CHAPTER II.

A POOR drudge, toiling like a white slave for bread, and conscious that, in spite of her best efforts, her powers were on the wane, that was what Mrs. Rayne was now; and once she had been such a pretty girl, with a happy home and hosts of friends, and as promising a future as stands before most of us. But evil destiny had come to her and altered everything.

It had come to her; she had not sought it out to fling herself away on it, and that was one of the consolations she found in the aftertime. There are certain natures that find an odd solace in the thought of being elected to suffer, chosen for the hard things and places of this life; and Mrs. Rayne was one of these exceptional people. The heavier the burden laid upon her, the more must she brace herself to bear it: that was all. Another type of woman would have revolted against the joyless sequence of her days of disillusioning. Mrs. Rayne resigned herself for twenty years, and ere half that time had elapsed she hardly knew if other women fared better than she. To slave for a husband who cared for nothing so long as he had money in his pockets, and for children who accepted all that love offered as the merest matter of course, was possibly not very unusual.

The disappointment about the children was the hardest thing to bear; for, in spite of themselves, most people hope something of the young, but with Dick's departure she began to lose faith in them too. Both

ie and Elsie went away so cheerfully and forgot home so easily, that she saw what shallow hearts they had. And young Tom was no better, though different; he was constitutionally idle, and selfish as the idle always are. Inheriting all his defects from his father, he inherited none of his better qualities; for Tom, senior, had been good-natured and spasmodically affectionate in his earlier days, and had liked his work and shown skill in it till he degenerated.

Young Tom emphatically did not like work, and had been born sulky—ill-conditioned, the neighbours called him, while prophesying depressing things of him.

Tom, junior, had been little more than a child, when Gordon had been entrusted to his mother, and this charge was the first recompense her life had attained. Mr. Lipsilt recommended her when a suitable guardian for a young child was wanted; and, as he was not given to baseless enthusiasms, his client was satisfied.

The money paid with the child was not a great fortune; great fortunes do not habitually migrate to localities like Bloater's Rents; but such as it was, it proved an indescribable boon; it rendered bread and water secure, and blunted the edge of daily necessity.

Its loss was hard, but she was accustomed to hard things; and, since she might keep Gordon, it did not matter so very much.

Gordon and old Tom had always been great chums. If her husband did nothing else, at least he looked after the child; and when Tom had his paralytic seizure—his "stroke," as it was called in the court—Gordon was old enough to return the kindness and look after him.

And, oddly and sadly enough, Mrs. Rayne's tenderness for her husband re-awakened because of his kindness to the child, who was nothing to either of them. To see the two opposite each other—Tom propped up in his elbow-chair, Gordon very erect and watchful—exchanging ideas with each other in the frankest spirit of amity and good fellowship, was a sight that thrilled Mrs. Rayne's heart with ever fresh delight.

Such stories as Tom told, and such gorgeous visions as Gordon's fancy painted from the materials thus supplied! The child had never seen a green field, nor any better substitute for one than the City parks; but he fancied them for himself, saw their hedgerows festooned with clematis, and honeysuckle, and starry wild flowers peeping from the lush

grass. And he dreamed of the sea, too; saw foam-crested waves breaking like emerald walls on sands of snow and silver, and light boats rising and falling like wild birds on their bosom.

"When I am a man I shall travel," he said to himself often with a sigh.

Busy as his hands and feet were all the day, he had much time for dreaming. Tom dozed a good deal in his elbow-chair; and then Gordon, over the needlework that looked so odd in his little fingers, did his thinking.

To see the beautiful world as it was elsewhere than in Bloater's Rents; to grow rich enough, in some fine heroic way, to be able to help father and mother—and even young Tom, whom he did not like; and to startle everyone with the discovery that little Gordon was a man, and clever—all this gave fine scope to the child's fancy.

But Mrs. Rayne's ambition for her darling lay very far from the region of poor Gordon's dreams.

Having been born to service, and understanding all about it in its best conditions, Mrs. Rayne found nothing degrading therein. To work for people in their own houses, and do their behests honestly, was, in her eyes, quite as dignified as most forms of bread-winning. And to think of Gordon, trustworthy and appreciated, and rising, step by step, to the most important domestic position, was, in her eyes, wholly delightful and desirable.

Of course he could not be spared now, nor possibly for years to come; but she would mention him to her mother, who would, perhaps, get a place prepared for him about the old home, when he was ready.

She rarely wrote home now, her time was so fully occupied; and when she was at leisure she was so weary; but she could rely on her mother to do what she wished when she asked her.

So the days went by, filled with their sequence of small events, and Gordon was almost eleven, and Tom was daily growing feebler and more dependent, and, since the small income accruing from Gordon was quite ended, the goad of ever-present necessity was sharper.

Young Tom had been apprenticed with a good deal of effort and through the influence of Mr. Lipsilt to a jeweller, working in a small way in the east end of the City. As an apprentice, he went unremunerated, save by his increasing skill, while his laziness redoubled, on the plea of hard work injuring his goldsmith's touch.

Then he had to go decently clothed, and this taxed the mother further; while the only money coming into the household was earned by her own hard hands.

Things were in this position when a black-edged letter came one day from Elsie. Elsie had several children now, and it was the death of one of these Mrs. Rayne anticipated as she opened the envelope.

"Childish lives were so ephemeral, they ended so easily, and happily left only tender memories behind them," she thought with a sigh, as she broke the seal.

"Dear mother," Elsie wrote, in her thin pointed writing, "poor grandma died two days ago, and will be buried to-morrow. The end was very peaceful, and so sudden that there was no time to send for you, though I suppose you could not have come in any case. I enclose you her photograph taken last year, also a letter that she seems to have written some time ago. She said I was to forward it to you, with her dear love, when she was dead."

Such, but minus the errors that disfigured it, was part of the letter that Elsie Matthews wrote to her mother.

It was now many, many years since Mrs. Rayne had parted from the old home and from all connected with it; years filled with grinding poverty and cruel toil; and therefore it was perhaps natural enough that, after the first rush of sorrow, the memory of the money accruing to her now, would enter among her other thoughts.

Her father had left her fifty pounds at his death, and a hundred pounds to the mother in trust for her. The interest of this the elder woman was to have for her lifetime; and at her death the total was to come to Mrs. Rayne.

At that moment a hundred pounds meant so much to her. Better food for poor Tom; warm flannels against the winter; strong boots for Gordon; a good suit of clothes for young Tom; and the wherewithal to pay those oppressive little outstanding debts. And then, as well as the money, there would be other things. Household linen, such as all North-country women accumulate; an old eight-day clock which would be worth bringing South for the tender memories which would be sure to come with it; and even—luxury unheard of—a dozen silver tea-spoons that had been a present from the mistress once, and a special sign of special approval.

Mrs. Rayne recalled her mother's pride in all her little domestic treasures with a

new access of tenderness, reflecting how these trivial things had survived their owner. The pile of sheets, the small number of damask table-cloths, the dozen or two of fringed towels which, in her childhood, she had seen taken out and aired with a remote sense of festival and luxury in the air. These things would be coming to her now; and the dear old mother was dead.

She had a hearty cry when she thought this; a cry that seemed to wash many sorrowful years away from her, and restore her momentarily to her girlhood and the sweet atmosphere of her early home. In this chastened mood she opened her mother's letter and read it with dim eyes and confused senses that at first refused to comprehend.

The letter was teeming with affection, affection that was apologetic from the first line. The poor old woman had known she was in the wrong from the outset, and had little skill to make the worse appear the better cause. And then her mental difficulty led her into confused verbiage, which defective spelling complicated still further; but, after lengthened study, this was what came out:—That Sandy Matthews, in wishing to marry Elsie, had demurred at her want of money, he having reckoned on her possessing something, as her grandparents were so well-to-do; that Elsie had entirely set her mind on him before any difficulty arose; and that, as he was steady, and earning good wages, the poor old woman had thought it hard that the girl should miss him. She had therefore done a thing which she knew she had no right to do, she had sold the little bit of Government security that was hers only for her lifetime, and had given the money, with Elsie, to Sandy Matthews.

"And the want of the little income from it has pinched me many a time," the old woman went on fretfully; "but my lady, that is Master Will's wife, is very good to me, and sends me delicacies now and again, so that I am never exactly at a loss. And Elsie is good to me, too, in her own way, and comes over often to have a chat, or to tidy up the house, now that I am too old and feeble to keep it right myself. Sandy treats her well on the whole; but he is a close man, and does not allow her much, and so I have eked out her furnishing with bits of linen, and odds and ends. And when her first child was christened, as I stood godmother to it, I gave it the silver spoons. I would rather

have given them to you, for you are my own child, but Elsie seemed to expect them," and so on, and so on. Then there was another burst of repentance for her weak-minded and unjust concessions, and at the end she added: "I suppose you could take the money, that was not mine, to give, from Sandy Matthews, if you made a point of law out of it; but, dear daughter, don't do that, the law is a two-edged blade, and wounds on both sides, and Elsie is your own daughter. But what breaks my heart now is the thought that has come to me lately, that maybe you need the money badly, and that the loss of it will be a sore, sore grief to you. And when that thought is with me, I feel almost as if I dare not meet your father in Heaven, seeing how he trusted me, and how I have broken faith."

Mrs. Rayne dropped the letter into her lap, and sat gazing blankly before her. She felt as if her very heart had turned to stone. It was not the loss of the money she minded so much, sorely as that was needed and welcome as it would have proved, but the thought that Elsie had been capable of robbing her, Elsie who knew all the cruel straits she had left behind her—the incessant trifling needs that her own slavish toil could not meet. And Elsie was her own child; the child for whom, years ago, she had watched and worked with such unwavering patience; the child whom she had been so glad to separate from her own cruel, toilsome life, and to send back to better things in her own girlhood's home.

For the moment she grew bitter against her daughter, and felt a hard scorn of her cruelty and greed. "Self-seeking, treacherous, plausible like her father," she said to herself, with cold contempt.

At that moment the poor invalid, sitting in his elbow-chair, looking straight before him with lack-lustre eyes and all unconscious of the storm rioting and raging in his wife's breast, turned his blank face towards her suddenly, and plaintively uttered the one word, "Mother!"

It was the name he had given her in recent days, confounding her, possibly, with his own mother, though of that she was not sure.

The word seemed to drop like a touch of flame on her conscience. Yes, she was Elsie's mother, and he, whatever he had been in the past, loved her now and needed her.

She went over to him and dropped on her knees beside him, hiding her face against him.

"Oh, Tom, Tom, it is more for you than for myself. I am sorry," she cried, great sobs shaking her fiercely as they burst from her.

"Poor lass!" he muttered, stroking her bowed head feebly, "poor lass!"

"And to think that our own child could be so cruel!" she said.

Tom shook his head with sorrowful, uncomprehending acquiescence.

"And knowing how much we needed it—that it was all we had to look forward to!"

Tom sighed, her mournful tone conveying to him a vague sense of trouble.

"We should have taken care of this money, shouldn't we, Tom, knowing its value now! If we had anything now we should be careful of it, in all loyalty and all love."

"Ay, truly, poor lass!"

Her talk was a monologue, but his gentle assent seemed to soothe and comfort her; and a kind of peace followed her exhaustion of weeping.

She tried to tell herself that things were no worse than they had been; but, for all that, she knew that they were worse, by the discovery of a cruel sorrow and disillusioning.

When Gordon came in, an hour later, she was calm again, and Tom had been put to bed, and was sleeping placidly.

In explanation of her sorrowful face, she told the child that the old mother in the North was dead, and he did not enquire further.

Gordon was eleven years old now—one of the thin slips of clever children that London slums pour forth so abundantly. Small for his age, with dark hair that had a trick of dividing itself into elf-locks, and keen eyes that looked forth inquisitively from beneath a prominent forehead, he was a child that a hundred people might have passed in the streets without notice.

Gordon was very fond of the streets—the wider ones, where there was room enough, and something attractive to be seen always, and where he was less hunted and driven than other boys of his condition, perhaps because he looked clean and tidy enough to have some possible business among well-dressed people. But there was another reason why Gordon liked the wide thoroughfares, and that was because something was to be earned there sometimes in unexpected ways, or perhaps given occasionally, for no reason that he could comprehend.

Gordon had never been taught to beg. Neither by inheritance nor by education was there a solitary trait of the mendicant in the child. In Mrs. Rayne's eyes, next to stealing, begging would have been the direst offence; but when Gordon could earn pennies honestly she was very glad; or when strangers dropped a coin into his empty little hand, impelled thereto by sympathy with something in his clear, frank glance, she was grateful.

That Gordon never solicited the money that was given him, young Tom alone permitted himself not only to doubt but to disbelieve. In Tom's opinion the respectable classes did not disburse coppers to youngsters without solicitation; but that Gordon should beg was in Tom's eyes, not only excusable, but praiseworthy. "And he has that kind of a way with him, that if he went about it cleverly, he might earn something for the whole of us," Tom told himself, with feeling.

The more Tom thought of Gordon's possibilities in this direction, the more disgusted he grew that such a fine vein of gold remained unworked. He knew, from enquiring about it, what a rich harvest some beggars reaped, and he did not see why Gordon could not have a hand in it too. Of course there was no need to tell mother that he begged, she was squeamish and absurd; but to please her he could call himself a crossing-sweeper or a news-boy.

As long as Gordon's little annuity had been in existence, there had not been a word with Tom junior, or anyone, regarding Gordon's duty in the matter of bread-winning; but when that failed, and times grew harder, young Tom felt himself filled with a noble scorn of the child who was a burden and an idler.

Tom was an idler himself, but of course the cases were not at all parallel; he was a son of the house, and had a future full of possibilities. Something easy and remunerative would be sure to turn up for him, and in any case there was always the jewellery business.

It was about a month before his grandmother's death that Tom had entered on a holiday from his apprenticeship. Times were bad, he said, and his master had no immediate need of him; he was, therefore, to remain at home till he was sent for; and Mrs. Rayne did not question his statement, perhaps because she was afraid. But when

day after day passed, and "old master" made no sign, and when the expectation of being sent for kept Tom from seeking other more profitable employment, Mrs. Rayne decided to see Mr. Lipsilt.

It was Mr. Lipsilt who had helped Tom towards his apprenticeship and gone surety for his good behaviour, and after Tom had lounged and loafed more than a year at home, she thought it time to speak to the lawyer, whom she dreaded, though knowing he meant to be kind; his uncompromising views in every-day matters, and his terse way of uttering them, frightened her.

Mr. Lipsilt was busier than ever now; and Mrs. Rayne had to wait longer than before; but he received her at last, looking broader, and bigger, and redder than at their previous interview; and she more limp and dingy by comparison.

"I came to ask about Tom," she said flutteringly, her lips feeling quite dry as she spoke.

"Ah, about Tom!" Mr. Lipsilt leaned back in his chair, and thrust his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat. "You mean your excellent son, I presume."

"Yes, sir, you remember you got him apprenticed to Mr. Studd, the jeweller?"

"Yes, I remember."

"And Mr. Studd sent him home for a time, because work was slack. He was to recall him when he wanted him; but he has not recalled him yet."

"Ah, he told you so. I am afraid he rather—misinterpreted. Mr. Studd does not intend to recall him, having dismissed him—for theft. Here, Judson," ringing the bell violently, "a glass of water. Confound the woman, she has fainted."

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcoates," etc.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MALICIOUS person, incapable or careless of understanding her, might have said that she took him in her train to enhance her own charms. But they needed no background; and yet they had not before had so good a foil.

As he was whirled suddenly into a society which, to his unaccustomed eyes, was brilliant and dazzling, his native awkwardness seemed to shoot out into sudden growth, and to take new life. It was in part vanity—for that amazingly subtle quality is more frequently of the masculine gender than male moralists lead us to suppose; and it is found in the clodhopper as well as the dandy; in part, pride; in part, a hurt and amazed sense that riches here went for less than the graces of life. A meeker man might have tried to hide his solecisms, and only groaned over them in private; but Uncle Bob seemed to thrust his mistakes into your face, and to suffer for them under the public gaze.

An Englishman has some need of dignity not to look ridiculous in the full dress which is the outcome of a Puritanic reaction from the artistic splendour of an earlier age. Whether Uncle Bob's ungainliness would have been better concealed by the velvet and fur of a more sumptuous day, may be a question; it showed out with cruel prominence under the orthodox attire, as if he and his coat had quarrelled, and the latter refused to recognise their partnership.

While he had Tilly by his side, he had

a sense of protection; but she was presently borne from him, and then his tribulation began. The talk that buzzed all round was too quick for him; he followed it lumberingly. Mrs. Popham's conventional phrases of welcome—not so warm as they once would have been—embarrassed him; and he embarked on a laboured explanation of his presence which led him into new difficulties. When she took him across the room to introduce him to a lady, he stumbled over more than one sweeping train; and he failed to know what to do with the introduction when it was made. He put out a big hand, but the lady waved her fan ignorantly; and he drew it back, suffering a hot shame.

She was a woman of the world, and something of a beauty and a wit; a person of large consideration in Mrs. Popham's little circle; and when, with a sort of careless imperiousness, she asked: "Who is that very odd person near the door? Do bring him over here; he looks as if he would be amusing," Mrs. Popham could do nothing but obey; but she paused to say half-apologetically:

"He is very rich."

The devouring interest she had once felt in Tilly's uncle had died in its natural course; but she had a remnant of heart tucked away somewhere under her spare bodice, and it spoke for him.

"Ah," said Lady Stanmore lightly, "it's that, is it? I knew there would be something; but I fancied it might be science."

"You know young Mr. Temple?" her hostess lingered on in explanation, "that is his future uncle-in-law."

Lady Stanmore's face showed a faint amusement; but she said suavely:

"I have heard of him. You must certainly bring him to me. And that

young lady is the prospective bride?" She turned a pair of fine eyes, and looked at Tilly, who stood near.

"She is very pretty, don't you think?" faltered Mrs. Popham, obeying a tardy sting of conscience.

"Very," said the other, in a high tone of careless assent, "and she illustrates the uncle's wealth most successfully."

It was to this guest that Mr. Burton was presently led, to minister to her entertainment. She did not probably mean of set purpose to be unkind; but in the world in which she lived the need to strangle importunate aches and to stifle the first note of dulness, made her of necessity cruel. She was inwardly wishing she had not yielded to Mrs. Popham's urgent invitation; it promised to be a stupid evening even with the adoration of young Mr. Temple to vary it; and she proceeded to extract what amusement she could out of Mr. Burton's social inexperience.

Fred had arrived early; and from a hidden corner he watched the scene with mingled shame, rage, and disgust, which quivered through his small soul. For the first time he suffered an anger against Tilly which was deeper and more compelling than his love for her. He had hinted with unconcealed complacency to Lady Stanmore of his conquest, confident that Tilly's charms would win approval even from an acknowledged queen of society; and now it seemed as if she had desired to mortify him, to shame his satisfaction, and to cast ridicule on his pretensions.

Hitherto he had held her taste in dress to be faultless, and she had never shown any desire to wear the ornaments he knew her to have in abundance; to-night, but for her young and smiling innocence, he would have called her vulgar. It seemed to his angry senses as if she had purposely bedizened herself with a gorgeousness which was quite out of keeping with her circumstances and with the occasion, and which must inevitably condemn her in the judgement of any person of refinement.

Fred felt it was hard; but when he looked across the room and saw her uncle standing in uneasy and clownish misery—a mark for Lady Stanmore's light shafts—his sense of injury grew almost insupportable. He could not hear a word that was said; but he saw smiles on the faces near her, and he knew her well enough to picture quite unerringly the light scorn with which she would set her talk above

his dull comprehension, that she might take a faint additional pleasure out of his mystification.

No thought of pity for the victim visited Fred; when he saw him extract with difficulty a large and gay bandana Tilly had omitted to forfeit, and proceed to polish his fevered head, Fred's pity was almost all for himself. To have boasted of his success, and to have its humiliating conditions thus laid bare before the eyes that, of all others, he would have blinded, this was bitter indeed. He had come with some unhealed soreness in his heart because of what he felt to be Tilly's neglect of his claims: he had called fruitlessly that afternoon at Yarrow House; and he had not seen her since her abrupt departure on the night of the Claverings' dance. He had meant to remonstrate with her, to urge his desires once more; but all these intentions were swept away before the force of his anger and wounded self-esteem.

He had so cultivated his sense of injury that when he at last reluctantly crossed the room to join her, he felt that her repentance must needs be very lively to soothe it; he was even capable of wishing that he might ignore her; but his whisper here and hint there had spread the fact of his engagement, and he could no longer pass as a mere acquaintance.

Tilly, unconscious of any reason why she should feel guilty, wondered if he were ill when she noticed the extreme pallor.

"Have you a headache?" she asked. "The room is very hot, and the scent of those banks of flowers is rather overpowering."

"I am quite well," he answered coldly. "Won't you come to some quieter place? We are standing as if we had grouped ourselves for effect."

His words had a bitter flavour. At another time he would have been willing enough to make one in a tableau with her for admiring eyes to see; but a group in which Uncle Bob took part could only stir smiles.

"So that's the gilded pill Temple has to swallow," he could hear his acquaintances whispering; "that old boy for an uncle-in-law. They say he means to stand by the young folks. Temple won't find it so easy to soar into the upper air he loves with this dead weight tied to him. Money isn't everything nowadays."

"As for blood," said another, "there's none on his side either. Son of a dispensing country apothecary."

"What! Has the fellow a father? He was always awfully vague about his people; left you to imagine them dukes if you pleased."

"If they had been dukes he wouldn't have been vague," sneered the first.

Perhaps he only imagined it all; but it is quite true that he had given himself airs, and doubtless he was now to suffer for them. He was suffering, indeed, as he stood with Tilly under the blaze of unsoftened light which Mrs. Popham loved.

"Won't you come to a quieter place?" he said.

"Do you know," she answered, resolved to keep a hold on her happiness while she could, "it sounds very like 'Won't you come and be scolded'? What is it, Fred? Is it something about me that doesn't please you?"

His glance involuntarily wandered down her draperies, and she was quick to interpret its meaning.

"You don't like my dress?"

"Well, since you ask me, I confess it seems to me rather—conspicuous."

She seemed to study its gay folds a moment.

"And the diamonds?" she questioned, looking up.

"I see no other unmarried lady wearing such jewels, certainly."

She smiled rather gravely.

"Those are two very good reasons for your argument," she said; "but I had a better reason than either of them. This dress was chosen by my uncle, and sent home as a surprise. The diamonds were his gift too. If the gown had been ten times uglier than it is—and it is really only a little too bright—I should have been proud to wear it, because of the loving thought he gave to the choice of it."

She looked at him as if she expected him to sympathise, but his face expressed a cold neutrality.

"You might think a little of pleasing me," he said.

"So I will," she answered. "I shall have a great deal of time for that. But, Fred, I want you to be a little happy with me now. I have had such a happy day, and, to crown and complete it, I persuaded my uncle to come here with me to-night. Have you seen him?"

"I have seen him."

For a moment he found it impossible to add anything to this curt phrase. Her loyalty to and love for this offensive boor was a continual wonder to him. It hinted

at a lack of perception which might even endanger their married happiness. What was the good of being rich if they were not to shake off the old traditions, and begin anew upon a higher plane? But he could not say to her, "You had no right to shame us both by bringing your uncle here;" and when he spoke, it was to say, "I don't think you studied his happiness when you persuaded him to come."

She turned her head swiftly to the spot where he stood. A little group had gathered round him and Lady Stanmore, attracted by her subtle wit. To Tilly's guilelessness it all looked very gay and animated.

"Who is that with whom he is talking?"

"Lady Stanmore," said Fred, with an accent that was lost upon her.

"He will like that," she said, with restored confidence. "He has a great respect and reverence for real ladies. He will like talking to her."

"It is she who is talking to him, I believe."

"He will like that better still," she laughed. "If he should seem dull or lonely by-and-by, you will go to him? He said, as we were coming here, that it was a pleasure to him to think that he should see you in the society you are used to. I don't know quite what he expects, but he seems to think you a very conquering sort of young man."

He was not to be moved by her gentle gaiety. The wound to his self-love was too deep. He felt that the mastery he meant to establish after marriage might become impossible. If she persisted in clinging to her uncle, how could he hope to shake her resolution?

The advantages of the position were all on her side. The money was hers. If she chose to set her life to the vulgar traditions of her youth, what power had he to prevent it? It was as gall and bitterness to his spirit to remember his helplessness; to feel his bondage to the man he was fast learning to hate.

"When we are married," he said, "you will not need to seek any companionship but mine, I hope. You will find me very devoted. We shall be a model pair, and be seen everywhere together."

"But the new ties need not exclude the old"—she spoke with a little reproach—"Uncle Bob shall go with us when he feels inclined, and, when he doesn't we shall carry all our triumphs home to amuse him."

"I shouldn't fancy they would interest him much," he said, forced to put some outward restraint upon himself, but inwardly angry that she should not understand.

"Oh, you don't know; you don't know how proud he means to be of us both. He is giving us everything that he may enjoy it through us. He is very unselfish. A great many men would have wanted to spend all that money on their own pleasures; but he is thinking only of us. If we are happy, that will make him happy too."

She spoke rather wistfully. She had made up her mind to marry him, and she would not listen to any vague disquietude as to what their life with each other might turn out. She was capable of giving him a loyalty equal to that she yielded her uncle, if he were capable of deserving it.

They danced once or twice, but less frequently than usual. Fred, when not dancing with her, was always careful to keep the breadth of the room between him and Mr. Burton. He would give no sanction to his presence there by talking to him or noticing him, and Mr. Burton's mutely astonished glances that seemed shot at him across space only stiffened his purpose.

Uncle Bob was having a very bad quarter-of-an-hour indeed, though possibly some people might have envied him the notice Lady Stanmore was bestowing on him. He could have talked with interest on any subject within the range of his experiences, but her words and her allusions were a dead language to him; and the perfection of her manner, which, in half-careless scorn, she polished for his benefit, left him as hot and cold as if under an aguish attack. She saw that she made him wretched, and presently, as his wretchedness ceased to amuse her, she turned away and walked across the room, leaving him unable to make up his mind whether it was more terrible to be talked to or be consigned to conspicuous neglect. He got on the path of the dancers, and was buffeted by them or skirted angrily by them, and in either case was wholly unhappy.

By-and-by, however, a pair of watchful eyes saw him.

"I must go to my uncle," said Tilly, withdrawing herself from the side of a young man who had encircled her waist for a waltz, and leaving him mutinous.

"But it's our dance!" he said in a voice of remonstrance.

"Oh, well," said the girl, who had waltzed in the last months rather oftener than Fred had liked with this particular young man, "it is our dance; but couldn't you just imagine for once that we've had it!"

"No imagination would make up for the loss. Don't you think your uncle could wait?"

"He might, but I couldn't. But if you'll excuse me this time I'll pay my debt by-and-by."

"Very well," he said; "I'll demand principal and interest, and on that condition I submit."

He took her himself to the spot where Uncle Bob stood, privately wondering what she meant, and wondering not the less when he noticed the start of joy with which she was received.

"Here I am," she said. "Did you think you had lost me? Are you enjoying yourself, dear?"

"Well"—he set his teeth with a grim sort of determination—"I can thole it a while longer if you're not tired of it yet."

"Is it so bad as that?" She passed her hand within his arm. They were standing near the mantelpiece, and she leaned forward to look at the clock. "We've just been here an hour."

"An hour!" he echoed. "It's like a month to me."

"Oh," she said, "I'm quite ready to be tired of it all, and we'll go home very soon if you like. Has Fred been with you?"

"No," he began almost violently, "he's never looked the road I'm on—" but he checked himself suddenly. "It's not his blame, and we'll not cast out," he went on as if he were trying how gentle he could be. "He's got other things to think of, and what should he come and talk to me for when there's you, forby all the other leddies?"

"Oh," she said, in a low voice, "don't make excuses for him on my account. There's a right and a wrong. Do you think, however much I cared for him, I couldn't see that? If he neglects you, you who—"

"Hoots! havers!" he cried. "Who's talking of neglect? If there's a wrong in the matter, it was in my coming here—an auld fool that should have known better. I'm just fair donner'd wi' the noise and the heat. I'll slip into a quiet corner; and just you go and enjoy yourself, and never mind me. I'll get on fine."

For all answer she drew him out of the

room, and led him to a small greenhouse built out to the back of the house, and opening from an ante-room. Here Mrs. Popham cultivated her love of bright colour and strong perfume. The night odours, indeed, of the luscious spring flowers were too powerful for any but those whose desire for a quiet refuge was urgent; and the greenhouse, and, for the moment, the ante-room too, was unoccupied. She led him to a seat behind a well-grown group of palms, and he went unresistingly. The gentle, yielding mood was on him still; and though the evening had been cruel to him, what she willed he was ready to do.

She put her head down on his shoulder.

"We'll go home very soon," she said, as if she were soothing a child.

Mr. Behrens was apt to make his visits at a late hour; but in a little time all risk of his appearing at Yarrow House would be over—and so would be the day of grace for which she had prayed. It had begun very brightly, but it seemed to be going down in shadow.

They sat down without a word. He would not, out of his love for her, speak out his affront and shame; but the bitterness of a fine lady's scorn had not passed him by. Dull though he was, he could suffer.

While he was asking himself in his bewildered way what he had done to bring it on him, the sound of voices and steps broke on their silence. Tilly moved impatiently. The voice that spoke had no familiarity to her ear; but Uncle Bob drew himself together with a dull shiver. He knew that high, scornful note.

"Believe me, you are very fortunate," it said. "There is nothing left for you to do. You will be spared even the necessity of visiting a jeweller's, and groaning over it, as I know you young men do. The diamonds are superb. I have none such now; I certainly had none such before I was married."

"You would not have worn them if you had. Why don't you say so?"

Tilly, who had scarcely listened, caught her breath when she heard the voice which made the rejoinder, though at first she had difficulty in recognising it for Fred's; it was so hard.

"How can I tell what I might have done if I had been so inordinately rich?" said the first speaker, languidly. "You have a very splendid career before you. Money, in some people's hands, can do so much. And when you tire of being splendid, you

will have the refreshment of a very original mind to turn to at home. I have been talking to your future uncle."

"Pardon me," said Fred, with a bitterness that seemed intensified by the quietness of his voice; "you are assuming that I shall live with my wife's uncle. I assure you nothing is further from my intention. I mean to spare myself that last humiliation."

"Isn't that a little ungrateful?" said Lady Stanmore, in her high, cool voice.

"Gratitude has its limits," said Fred, who had worked himself into a blind fury of disgust. Her calm disdain had stung his pride till he had to give voice to his venom. "When a man offends you by his very existence, nothing that he can do is likely to awaken your gratitude except his self-extinction. The best that is left is to spend his money a little less unworthily than it would be spent in his hands."

"Ah, I have no doubt that you will find it very possible to spend his money," said Lady Stanmore, turning the floods of her scorn upon him now. She began to find him very odious. She might, in his circumstances, have acted practically as he was about to do; but she owed it to her rank to keep a decent reticence. After all, this young man was of the class she despised, and he showed it by the very riot of his contempt.

Tilly, who had listened at first hardly understanding — how should she understand, indeed? — sat as if she were under a spell. Her hand clutched her uncle's arm, and his hard breathing seemed to be the sound of her own pulsing heart. Then she remembered that this base talk was not meant for her, and she rose suddenly from her seat.

Her first impulse was to walk round the screen of palms and confront Fred and his companion; but she checked herself. Even in the first tumult of her emotions, she was willing to spare him the shame of exposure. She moved forward till she knew that the rustle of her dress, and a fold or two of its bright drapery, must have been heard and seen between the foliage. She was right, for the steps died away.

"That was Miss Burton, was it not?" said Lady Stanmore, without pitying him. "I trust, for her future peace, she did not overhear our talk. I am told she is devoted to her uncle."

"Yes," said Fred, "she is bound up in him."

He left her without an excuse. Something impelled him to go back and know the worst at once. He went quickly round the palm screen, and met her face to face.

She was standing in front of the seat as if she expected him, and would shield her uncle, who sat there stricken dumb—motionless, except for that heavy breathing that made his broad chest heave and fall.

Tilly looked splendidly beautiful. All her sensibility was turned into a burning indignation which made her feel strong to face anything, and which lit her eyes with fire.

"Yes," she said, as if in answer to a question from him, "we heard you. You will say, perhaps, that we ought not to have listened; but then, we did not think, having given you our trust and love, that anything you could say of us would be a pain to us to hear."

"Not your love—you have never given me that."

"Perhaps not," she said, willing to be just, even now. "I tried to do it; but if I had really loved you, I think I should have died for very shame to-night."

"If you had loved me," he said doggedly, shivering under her lash, but not daring to examine his own baseness yet, "if you had loved me, there might have been some chance of my explaining—"

"Explaining! Your explanation would have been even a greater offence than your original sin! Go now, and leave us. It is all you can do. If anything I can say has power to move you, I beseech you to go quietly."

She turned and gave a swift glance at the figure sitting motionless on the bench. It seemed to move and stir her frozen tenderness.

"Some day," she said, faltering a little, "I may be able to forgive you. I will try to remember only the best. I will try not to think hardly of you; but you must leave us now."

He obeyed her dumbly. Without a word he turned and went.

Then her strength seemed to come back to her. She knelt down by the bench; she put her arm round the bent figure there.

"Come, dear," she said, "lean on me. Do not fear to hurt me, I am very strong to-night. We are going home, now. It is all over, dear; and we are going home to be always together."

CHRONICLES OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS.

If in a geographical sense the Channel Islands seem to belong rather to France than Great Britain, historically they occupy a position virtually independent of either country. They are a survival, indeed, of the Duchy of Normandy. In their laws, institutions, language, we have a presentment of that ancient State—unaffected by foreign conquest, uninfluenced by revolution. Here the jargon of feudalism is still heard in the Law Courts; the Seigneur still exists with his fiefs and feudal privileges; the vast undigested bulk of English statute law is unknown to these fortunate islanders; equally so is the logical code of their Continental neighbours. The old customist of the days of Duke William and Duke Robert is the lawyer's text-book of to-day. The islands have no Magna Charta, never presented a bill of rights, had no share in the Act of Succession; and yet their inhabitants are just as free, are almost as contented, and are, individually, a good deal more prosperous than the inhabitants of the neighbouring isles of Great Britain.

As far as origin goes, the people of the Channel Islands are closely akin both to their neighbours on the Norman peninsula, and to their more distant English fellow subjects. The Celtic people who settled in South Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany, spread themselves no doubt also over these islands, as well as over the adjacent coasts; but they have left few traces of their presence in the isles, unless, indeed, the dolmens, stone circles, and other rude monuments still to be found are the work of this primitive race. But from the first centuries of our era, and long before the downfall of the Roman Empire, Scandinavian rovers had established themselves here and there about the mouths of rivers, and among the low-lying meadows. The advantages of the Channel Islands for piratic settlements, could hardly have been overlooked by the Northmen. They came, and saw, and conquered. The Celtic inhabitants of the islands, probably, found their position untenable, and migrated to the mainland; and the invaders, occupying the land entirely, gave their own names to every natural feature of the islands. Still there is reason to believe that up to the tenth century these isles acknowledged the supremacy of the Duke of Brittany,

and that they did not come into the possession of Rollo under the treaty of Epte, but were acquired by his successor, William Longsword, at the same time that the Cotentin—the Norman peninsula, partly corresponding to the modern French Department of La Manche—was wrested from the hands of Alan of Bretagne.

Having once become Norman, thus the isles continued, even to the present age. That they were not conquered with the rest of Normandy by the French under Philip Augustus is due, no doubt, to the fourteen miles of stormy sea, which separates the nearest of the islands from the coast of the mainland. A sea not stormy only, but bristling with rocks, encumbered with shoals and quicksands—the wreckage of the land which once joined these scattered islets to the European continent. About these rocks and shoals the full force of the Atlantic tide comes sweeping in, rising from thirty to forty feet and forming violent currents, and rude whirlpools, compared with which the dangers of Scylla and Charybdis are mere child's play. This terrible Channel is known to the French as "la Déroute,"—the Ruin, the Desolation, the sea-path that leads straight to destruction. The hundred miles of the not too quiet sea which separates the Channel Islands from the English coast offers not one tithe of the obstacles and dangers which lurk in the narrow channel of the Déroute.

Here was the real defence of the Channel Islands against the French conquerors of Normandy; added to this was the strong affection the people had for their own Dukes and their own independence—a feeling that has lasted to the present day; for it is rather as "dux Normannorum" than as Queen of England, that our present monarch commands the allegiance of the islanders. And thus they have preserved their language; and with them the rude Norman-French of the trouvères and chroniclers of old is still a living tongue. The chief of these old rhyming chroniclers, Wace—the author of the "Roman du Rou," which tells us more about the Norman Dukes and the conquest of England than any other record of those times—Wace, the poet, whose lines have the easy-going of a newly macadamised road, was, as he himself tells us, a real Jerseyman.

Wace de l'isle de Gersui,
Ki est en mer verz occident,
Al lieu de Normandi apent,
En l'isle de Jersui fu nez.

As for the old institutions of Normandy,

Jersey possesses them still. Her "Cour Royale," modelled on the Exchequer Court of Rouen, for long centuries continued to be the seat of legislative as well as executive authority. In time of difficulty or danger, the "États" were summoned—the States, which consisted of the Court itself, with its twelve Justiciars; of the Clergy, the Curés, of the twelve parishes of Jersey; of the Seigneurs of the several fiefs; and of the twelve parish Constables, who represented the commonalty.

In later times, when representative institutions became in the ascendant, fourteen elected Deputies were added to the États, and, under this form, the Legislative Assembly of the island still remains. The islands form two grand "bailliages," with a Bailli at the head of each; no mere functionary of the comic opera, but President of the Court, Commander of the local levies, Speaker of the House of Legislature, with the general headship of the district under the Royal Governor.

The chief seat of all this ancient discipline is now Saint Heliers, one of the most pleasantly-situated towns in the kingdom. Surrounded on all sides by an amphitheatre of hills, except where the sea sparkles sunnily to the south, the town enjoys a specially mild and equable climate. Above it winds the charming "Val des Vaux," more pleasing even than the famous Vaux de Vire, although no race of troubadours has issued therefrom, or owed inspiration to its cider as renowned as that of Normandy. The town takes its name from famous Saint Hilary, who actually, as tradition affirms, suffered martyrdom at the hands of the cruel Normans, as yet unconverted to the faith of which they became the vigorous defenders.

In the Bay of Saint Aubin, outside the harbour of Saint Heliers, is Castle Elizabeth, built in the reign of the virgin Queen on the site of an ancient abbey. The castle occupies a rocky island, accessible at low tide by a causeway a mile long. A gun from the fort announces the moment of sunrise and sunset, and its reverberations may arouse a crowd of ancient memories as we recall the days which have elapsed since the old fort first gave voice from its dark embrasures. Upon its platform Raleigh must have stood, watching the sun go down into the waves, reflecting sadly, perhaps, how the sun of his Royal Mistress was setting too—the sun of his own prosperity and fortunes—and the dark shades of night already falling.

Under the guns of the fort lies a little rocky islet, where Saint Hilary built his humble hermitage, and thence the coast stretches out on either hand with sandy bays, and rocky promontories, dotted at regular intervals with martello towers.

Turning to the eastwards we come to Saint Clement's Bay, with the Seymour tower protecting its entrance a mile and a half out at sea, and then we reach Gorey, once of more importance for trade than Saint Heliers, and with a bay and anchorage far surpassing that of its rival, but now chiefly used by the oyster fishers.

Next, old Mont Orgueil, which, with its grey towers rising from the rocky headland, was once the Acropolis of the island. Who would conquer Jersey must first master Orgueil Castle, standing there in its pride and bidding defiance to the arms of man as well as to the roaring waves.

Against Mont Orgueil came Bertrand Du Guesclin, after winning Normandy from the English; but this nut of further Normandy proved too hard for him to crack.

In the following century, during the English Wars of the Roses, a force of Norman-French came once more against the Islands. Margaret, the Queen, had given them away, bestowed them upon Pierre de Brézé, Seneschal of Anjou, her great champion, to be his in full sovereignty, if he could conquer them. Pierre himself was fighting in the north of England for his Royal Mistress; but he dispatched a strong force of his Norman retainers to take possession of his dominions. The Normans landed all unperceived, escalated the heights, overpowered the garrison, and took the castle by sheer force of surprise. But the islanders mustered in force—they were always strong for the defence of their islands against any foreign foe—and, under the leadership of Philip de Carteret, Seigneur of Saint Ouen, they retook the castle and drove the enemy from the island.

In later times the castle was utilised as a State prison. Here just before the great Civil War, William Prynne, the Puritan, was confined, and improved the occasion by writing a religious poem, called "Rockes Improved, etc.," which he dedicated to "his most highly honoured, special kind friend, Lady Anne Carteret;" whose husband was "Lieutenant-Governor and Bailli of the Isle." The descriptive opening of the poem is a sufficient sample of the rest.

Mount Orgueil Castle is a lofty pile
Within the easterne part of Jersey Isle.
Seated upon a rocke full large and high,
Close to the seashore, next to Normandie.

Prynne's religious sentiments were sure of sympathy in the island, for although the inhabitants were generally loyal to the King, yet there was a strong Calvinistic feeling, especially among the Seigneurs of the isle, an inherited feeling, for their fathers had sympathised with the Huguenots in the great religious wars of the time, and the defeated chiefs of the religion in Normandy proper had often found refuge and support among the islanders.

Always in the history of the isles the name of Carteret appears from one century to another. It is Carteret of Saint Ouen, the chief fief of the island, which has been held by the Carterets, perhaps, from the first settlement of the Normans on the Islands. A Carteret was with Duke William at the battle of Hastings, as Wace himself relates:

De Cartrai Onfrei e Maugier,
Ki estait novel chevalier.

The Château Saint Ouen is one of the few ancient manor-houses of the island. Part of it dates probably from the fifteenth century, and it is stored with ancient heir-looms and pictures, one of which latter represents a perhaps half legendary horse belonging to the Philip de Carteret mentioned above, as the saviour of the island in the fifteenth century; a horse that carried its master through the ranks of the Frenchmen who surrounded him, made some wonderful leaps in its progress, and then fell dead at the gate of the Château, having brought his rider in safety to his own door.

Another Carteret was Bailli of the island in the reign of Henry the Eighth, at a time when the inhabitants were grievously oppressed by the Governor, Sir Hugh Vaughan, whose father, it is contemptuously said, was a Welsh tailor. For all that, he might have been descended from a lofty race, and have been own cousin to the Tudors. Anyhow, he was in high favour with the King and Cardinal, and became a great terror to the islanders, respecting neither the honour of women nor the consciences of men. Opposed by Carteret, he procured that his foe should be accused of high treason, and all his possessions seized. Carteret fled the island, and made his way to Court to plead his own cause before the King. The Duke of Norfolk was his friend, but Vaughan was the protégé of the more powerful Cardinal. It would have gone hard with Carteret, but for his skill with the arbalest, with which he so charmed the heart of Henry at a shooting

party, that the King accorded him all he asked. Vaughan was dismissed from his office, and succeeded by Sir Anthony Ughtred, a cousin of Anne Boleyn's; and during the period of the ascendancy of the latter, the Carterets were high in favour at Court. And hence came the settlement of a branch of the family in England, which has supplied, at least, one eminent statesman to the service of the Crown.

Other names beside that of Carteret, sprung from the ancient seigneurage of the isles, have a familiar sound to English ears. The Saumurez, for instance, noted in our naval wars; Lemprière, better known than loved by the schoolboys of a past generation, for the Classical Dictionary compiled by a scion of the house; the Giffards, who have supplied many gallant captains for sea and land; with many others who have helped to make the greatness of England. And yet with all their loyalty to England, the islanders have had sundry narrow escapes of becoming French subjects. Some of the earlier of these invasions have been already alluded to; the latest attempt at a French conquest deserves a little further space.

It was during the war of American Independence, and the English Navy—with France and Spain, and Holland too, at one time on its hands—was hard pressed to guard the Channel coasts; and the time seemed propitious for France to make an attempt upon the English isles so near her coast. Dumouriez, afterwards a famous soldier of the Republic, was then in command at Cherbourg, and strongly urged the enterprise. Had the affair been entrusted to a skilful soldier, such as the Commandant of Cherbourg, the result might have been different; but the army of the old French monarchy was under altogether aristocratic influences. Thus the Prince of Nassau was selected as the leader of the invasion, and sailed from Saint Malo in the spring of the year 1779, with nine ships, containing fifteen hundred troops. The voyage under favourable circumstances was of only a few hours; but a whole fortnight elapsed before the Prince cast anchor in the Bay of Saint Ouen. Here the ships exchanged a few shots with the forts on shore, and then, the weather being unfavourable for a landing, they sailed back as they came.

Nothing more was done till the Christmas of the following year, when a force was collected—a kind of forlorn hope of fifteen hundred men, volunteers from different

corps—under the command of the Baron de Rullecourt. The French had a few sympathisers on the Island of Jersey, and it is recorded that on Christmas Day a signal fire was seen on the heights between Rosil and La Coupe, while an answering glow appeared in the heavens from the direction of the French coast. This was afterwards supposed to be an intimation that no English cruisers were then in the neighbourhood. Anyhow, on the following day the French flotilla put out to sea from the port of Granville. Again bad weather intervened. The transports were knocking about the seas till the fifth of January, the men exposed to all kinds of hardships, and half-starved with cold and hunger.

The Baron, however, was one of the "vieille roche;" harsh, arbitrary, but determined. Making the point of La Roque towards evening, he disembarked his troops on that lonely and desolate part of the coast, in a bay stuck full of rocks, where several of the transports were wrecked, and their crews perished. With the relics of his force, amounting to seven hundred men, de Rullecourt marched across the country in the dead of night. Not a soul had noticed the landing of the troops, or given warning to the authorities of the island, and the French marched into Saint Heliers before daylight as if they had dropped from the skies. A sentry was shot before he could give the alarm, the main guard were surprised and made prisoners, one man, however, escaping to give the alarm to the regiment—the 78th Highlanders—who were quartered on Gallows Hill, above the town. The Governor—Major Corbet—was made prisoner, with the whole civil and military administration. De Rullecourt, concealing the smallness of his force, impressed upon the captive Governor the desperate nature of the situation. The whole island was in the power of the French, who had dispersed all the forces opposed to them. It only remained to save bloodshed by signing a formal capitulation. The Governor weakly consented to this course. The first object of the French Commander was to obtain possession of Fort Elizabeth, then considered almost impregnable, and commanding every approach to the harbour of Saint Heliera. Captain Mulcaster, of the Engineers, was in command of the castle, and to his coolness was due probably the preservation of the island. The Governor despatched a formal order for the surrender of the fortress, under the

terms of the capitulation. A French officer accompanied the Governor's messenger to arrange the transfer of the post. The English Captain pooh-poohed the whole matter. He thrust the Governor's despatch into his pocket apparently unread. He did not understand French, and could not be bothered; and his visitors were bundled out with scant ceremony. But when, shortly afterwards, a French detachment appeared on the causeway, now laid bare by the falling tide, the guns of the fort opened briskly upon them.

Nor were the Governor's orders received in any better spirit by the gallant Highlanders. The militia of the island had assembled at the first alarm, and joined the regular troops on Gallows Hill. It was soon decided to attack the French in Saint Heliers from several different points, and to recapture the town by assault. Major Peirson, of the Ninety-fifth Regiment, took the command of the chief column. The French were drawn up in the market place, with two or three small field-pieces commanding the various approaches. They made a gallant resistance, but presently broke under the determined attack of superior numbers. In the moment of victory, Major Peirson, who gallantly headed the assault, was mortally wounded. The scene is represented in a noted picture by David Copley; and engravings of the same hero vied in popularity with the "Death of Wolfe," and are still sometimes to be seen in print-shop windows. At about the same time, de Rullecourt, standing on the steps of the Court-house, was struck by a bullet in the mouth, and soon after expired.

The Bailliage of Guernsey, which includes Alderney and Sark with the little island of Jethou, for the most part shares the laws and institutions of its neighbour, Jersey; and can recount even more attempts at conquest by the French. That it was conquered in the reign of Edward the Third by a Welsh Prince is a rather startling announcement; but it is certainly a fact that one Owen, a Welshman, of the Royal line no doubt, although Welsh authorities are silent about him, did actually take possession of Guernsey on behalf of the French King, and held it for several years. This invasion is still preserved in tradition on the island as the descent of the Aragonsais; the chief part of the assailants having been mercenaries from the kingdom of Aragon, in the pay of France. As for

Alderney, it stands out something like a huge battery, scarped and grooved with the immense defensive works which at one time or other have engulfed so much English treasure. Beyond, lie the Caskets; those famous rocks which have caused the destruction of so many gallant ships. There struck the "Blanche Nef," and perished the son and daughter of Henry, the great Plantagenet; and before and after, stretches an endless roll of wrecks, even down to our own times. For although now well defined by powerful lights that shine out far over the seas, yet these Caskets seem akin to the loadstone rocks of the "Arabian Nights"; and during thick fogs in the Channel they still may count upon their victims.

LINDLEY MURRAY.

"PAUCIS notus, paucioribus ignotus," is the inscription which marks the grave of Burton, who wrote the "Anatomy of Melancholy," and with equal truth and fitness may the words stand at the commencement of this article.

The name of Lindley Murray is, indeed, familiar to us as a household word, and his works, if not exactly popular, which school-books never are, have attained to a world-wide celebrity, and almost to a universal circulation; but of the man himself, his personality, his character, his history, we know nothing, or next to nothing. Nor does the study of his chief work help to increase our knowledge in this respect. He gives us his opinion as to the wisdom of Socrates and Plato; he seems to suggest some impossible kind of relation between eagles' wings and the Drapers' Company; and he mentions not only that he loved Penelope, but that Penelope was loved by him. This is all, however; and the avowal, though interesting in itself, is isolated, fragmentary, and tantalising. There is a reproach underlying the old truism, that the world knows nothing of its greatest men; and, though Lindley Murray can hardly claim a place in such a category, still it may not be undesirable for us to learn somewhat of the life-career of one who fills an honourable, indeed an almost unique, position in our educational literature.

He was born in 1745, at Swetara, Pennsylvania, the eldest of the twelve children of a prosperous Quaker, who was at once a miller, a shipowner, and a merchant.

Early in life young Lindley developed a wild and unmanageable temperament, and when little more than an infant clambered out on the roof and refused to return until guaranteed against punishment. At school he was smart and intelligent, rather than diligent or industrious. He had no disinclination to study in itself, but the acquisition of knowledge interfered with amusement, and he often played truant. Boy-like he had a fondness for teasing animals, though without any cruel intention, and this propensity remained with him until, in matured years, he was cured of it by the following occurrence. Being in London in 1771, he went to see some elephants kept in the Royal stables at Buckingham Palace, and while there managed to abstract some of the food placed before one of them; some weeks after he paid a second visit, having forgotten all about the matter; but the elephant's memory was more retentive, and he aimed with his trunk a furious blow at the future grammarian, which the latter with great difficulty avoided.

An incident in 1759, when he was only fourteen years of age, illustrates in a remarkable manner his strength of character and firmness of purpose. Having received a severe beating from his father for spending an evening at his uncle's house on an occasion when it was impossible for him to obtain the permission, which his parents would not have refused if at home, the sense of injustice rankled so much in his breast that he determined to run away. His father, a short time before, had presented him with some imported watches, in order to develop the trading instinct, in which he was somewhat lacking, so that the lad was not destitute of funds. His plan of emancipating himself was an extraordinary one for a boy of fourteen to adopt. He obtained a suit of clothes different to those he usually wore, which were probably of the Quaker cut, and actually placed himself at a boarding-school at Burlington, New Jersey, intending to acquire a knowledge of French before beginning the world on his own account. For some time he remained here happily enough until meeting one day, in Philadelphia, a gentleman who knew him, he was entrusted with an important letter, and asked to deliver it personally in New York; this he conscientiously did; but, being detained in the city, he was discovered by his uncle and with difficulty induced to return

home. Here all was made easy; a tutor was procured for him; he joined eagerly in the proceedings of a debating club; and, manifesting a taste for law, his determination overcame his father's opposition to this choice of a profession; and he was bound, or articulated, to the family lawyer, having for his fellow-pupil, John Jay, afterwards celebrated as an American statesman.

Having been called to the Bar, he married in 1767, and for a few years lived in England.

Finding on his return to America, in 1771, that legal business was almost in abeyance owing to the political troubles of the Revolution, he purchased a seaside residence at Islip, Long Island, and spent his time fishing and boating, at the same time restoring his health which was not very robust.

After four years he came back to New York, and, seeing no better prospect than before of professional occupation, he boldly entered into trade, for which he had hitherto shown no aptitude. Either his ability was good, or his good fortune very great, or more probably both were favoured by the circumstances of the time; but, whatever was the cause, his commercial enterprise was rapidly successful; and shortly after the Declaration of Independence he retired on a competence which lasted him for the remainder of his life.

He acquired a beautiful house on the Hudson, a few miles from the city, and was looking forward to a future of happy ease, close to his friends, freed from business anxieties, and furnished with occupation and amusement by his gun, his garden, and his boat. Such dreams, however, he was never permitted to realise. His health began to decline and his limbs to lose their power. The air at his river-side "paradise" did not agree with him; medicinal springs and country resorts proved equally inefficacious; and, finally, his doctors declared that his best prospect of health lay in a residence in England, recommending the air of Yorkshire as the most suitable to his constitution.

Accordingly, in 1784, he left America, and, after some time spent in looking out for a suitable house, he finally fixed himself at Holdgate, within a mile of York, from which he never afterwards removed. His bodily health was fairly good, but his power of motion grew weaker and weaker, and before long entirely failed. Confined thus to the house, principally to a single

room, he naturally turned to study, and at length to authorship, as a resource, and in 1787, he produced his first book. This was a series of sketches intended to show the power of religion over the mind, especially in time of misfortune or at the approach of death, and was illustrated by examples ranging from Socrates, Confucius, and Saint Paul, to Richelieu, Cæsar Borgia, and Dr. Doddridge. This he published anonymously, and distributed it gratuitously amongst his neighbours; but the book thus modestly introduced became very popular, and eventually ran through eighteen editions.

Some of his friends having established a school at York for "the guarded education of young women," Mr. Murray delivered some informal lectures to the teachers on the methods of imparting a knowledge of the English language. These little lectures or addresses he, at their request, expanded into book-form, and so, in 1795, his "English Grammar" was offered to the public. Its success was immediate and unmistakeable; and, thus encouraged, he wrote a book of Grammatical Exercises, followed by a Key; and, in 1797, made an Abridgement of the Grammar, which, even in his own lifetime, reached its eighty-sixth edition.

Next appeared an "English Reader," and in 1800, a "Sequel," or more advanced volume, which was very highly and deservedly praised. It was an enormous improvement on the books of a similar kind then existing. Its selections, which aimed at being interesting as well as instructive, were marked by judgement and taste, and comprised such poems as "The Traveller," "The Deserted Village," "Gray's Elegy," and "Grongar Hill," with shorter extracts from Thomson, Milton, Cowper, Crabbe, and Prior.

In 1802 he wrote "Le Lecteur François;" a few years later, an "Introduction" to the same; and, in 1804, an English Spelling Book, and also a small Primer for very young children.

The Spelling Book was as well and carefully executed as his other books, and met with similar acceptance. Nearly fifty editions have been called for, and it has been published, not alone in England and America, but at Calcutta and even at Cadiz.

His other writings were few and unimportant. A small tract against theatrical and frivolous amusements appeared at Philadelphia in 1799, and a "Doctrinal Compendium for Young Members of the

Society of Friends," a little book inculcating the duty of daily perusing the Bible, and a pamphlet biography of a religious friend of his, Mr. Tuke, from time to time issued from his pen. This, with a volume of extracts from "Horne's Commentary on the Psalms," was all he ever wrote; but these productions did not terminate his literary activity. He considered it his duty to make such additions and improvements as were found necessary in those works which had received so large an amount of public favour.

Urged by his London publishers he issued, in 1808, a library edition in two volumes of his Grammar, with its Exercises and Key, and personally superintended the alterations and revisions which were called for by an interminable series of new editions. This he did from a sense of moral obligation, and not influenced either by desire or prospect of profit, for he had disposed of his copyrights on terms and for objects equally creditable to himself.

At the present day, when the rival claims of publishers and authors are so hotly canvassed, it is interesting to read his account of the commercial side of his literary experience. He says of his publishers, "they gave a liberal price for the books; and, I must say, that in all our transactions together—which have not been very limited—they have demonstrated great honour and uprightness, and entirely justified my confidence and expectation. I have great pleasure in knowing that the purchase of the copyrights has proved highly advantageous to them; and though it has turned out much more lucrative than was at first contemplated, they are fully entitled to the benefit."

For his Grammar, Abridgement, Exercises, and Key, he obtained eight hundred pounds; for the Reader, Introduction and Sequel, seven hundred and fifty; for his French books, seven hundred pounds; and for his Spelling Book and Primer, five hundred pounds. He at one time contemplated a kind of expurgated edition of the poets; but, happily perhaps for his reputation, never attempted to carry it into effect. His means being sufficient for his simple mode of life, and having no family, he devoted all his literary income to charitable and benevolent objects. He furnished a brief autobiographical sketch in a series of letters, which comprise the history of his life down to 1809; and this forms the basis of the volume of Memoirs published after his death. From this date, the

record of his history is almost devoid of incident. In 1810 he was admitted an Honorary Member of the Historical Society of New York, and in 1816 of the Literary and Philosophical Society of the same city. These were the only literary or academic distinctions he ever received. Indeed, so retired was the life he led, from temperament as well as necessity, that many of those acquainted with his writings were either altogether ignorant of, or very imperfectly informed as to, the facts of his existence; and Dr. Blair, who corresponded with him, shared the most generally received opinion that he was a schoolmaster. The Edgeworths, and a few other visitors of social or literary distinction, called on him in his retreat; and were much impressed by his kindly manner and dignified appearance, and by his powers of conversation, so far as his weakness of voice permitted him to exercise them.

Of his works it is not necessary to say much. Their merit is proved by the permanence as well as the width of their popularity; and their general utility has never been called in question. Their plan and method have been gradually superseded by the more logical and scientific system of our own time; and even technical inaccuracies have been pointed out by Mr. Moon and other critics. The dreadful "and which" whose discovery in "The Heart of Midlothian" has so shocked Mr. Andrew Lang, is also to be found in the Grammar of Lindley Murray. We smile, too, while we differ from his dictum, that as a matter of gender "we perceive an impropriety" in calling a woman a philosopher or an astronomer, though "we can say she is an architect, a botanist, a student," so that a correct designation might be given to Bess o' Hardwick, while it was denied to Mrs. Somerville. But, even if his errors and inelegancies were ten times more numerous, they could not seriously detract from the solid value of his achievement. His closing years were passed in great pain; but his intellect was always clear, and he never ceased altogether from work. True, he laboured in English, and not in Greek; and his work was synthetic and constructive, rather than analytic and critical. Otherwise, he is like enough to Mr. Browning's hero:

So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;
Still, thro' the rattle parts of speech were rife:
While he could stammer

He settled Hoti's business—let it be!
Properly based Oun—
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic De,
Dead from the waist down.

His maimed and suffering existence was prolonged until the sixteenth of February, 1826, when he expired somewhat suddenly, in the eighty-first year of his age. Through all the long illness which made up his life, he had been nursed with the most careful attention by his wife, to whom, on the anniversary of their wedding, which was also her birthday, he never failed to present a little literary offering of tenderness and affection.

With sweetest memories mingled, and with hope.

She survived him for some years, and on her death, his property was, according to his will, devoted to the manumission and education of negro slaves, and to missionary efforts amongst the American Indians. He never took any part in politics, and would, perhaps, have experienced some difficulty in choosing a side; for, though he loved America, and regretted his enforced exile, he was also warmly attached to England; and of that British Constitution under which he lived, he expressed the opinion, "it has stood the test of ages and attracted the admiration of the world." He was neither a genius nor a hero, not even in the strict sense, a scholar; but there is an actual and an abiding character of usefulness in his effort to lighten "the long and tedious track of slavish grammar." He was a good man; patient, benevolent, tolerant, with a quick intelligence, vivid and active sympathies, and an energetic tenacity of will—a graft of American hickory upon English oak.

LONDON SHOWS.

THE streets festooned with flags; the roar of the City traffic stilled, and instead only the tramp of countless footsteps; windows filled with faces—children's faces, young women's faces, all kinds of faces where, in a general way, nothing is to be seen but wire blinds and dusty ledgers; mud and slush on the pavements, and everywhere a great spread of umbrellas glistening with rain; such is the general aspect of things to one waiting patiently for the Lord Mayor's Show on the edge of a damp kerbstone by Ludgate Circus. It needs, indeed, the sight of great Saint Paul's showing hazily from the top of the hill, and little Saint Martin's spire

that does not reach its big neighbour's shoulder, to convince the spectator that he is really within the limits of London City, so unfamiliar is the aspect of the scene. The Circus is a whirlpool of turbid humanity, prevented from settling into a compact mass by the benevolent efforts of a few mounted police, who circle round and round. But, in pauses of the general uproar of the shouts, yells, whistling, hooting, shrill cries, may be heard the bells ringing out a full volley overhead; sounds which alone, amongst all the turmoil, have retained the ancient note of free and careless rejoicing.

Certainly, a London crowd of to-day takes nothing very seriously. There is a mocking, bitter laugh for the most venerated institutions, and the many-tongued voice has an acrid, cynic accent. The steady, respectable element, indeed, holds its tongue, and keeps an anxious watch over its pockets; and it is the looser, wilder members of the crowd who are seen and heard the most. But how numerous these last, how threatening, and how quickly increasing and gathering strength, it only needs an occasional day in the streets to realise. And the most discouraging part of the business is the immense contingent of idle youths; most of whom have passed under, what ought to have been, the civilising effects of education in the Board Schools, but who certainly show to no greater advantage than the roughs and loafers of a former era. Indeed, the clamorous voices of the swarms of idle or half-idle youth who will earn no daily bread, nor even the pinch of salt that should accompany it, to whom any real apprenticeship to any decent craft, or trade, or mystery, or any reliable way to earn an honest living, is altogether inaccessible, seem to reproach us for all the pains and parade which we have given to teaching.

Perhaps it is in deference to the keen unfriendly commentary of the streets, that the pageant of to-day assumes a somewhat apologetic character. Here are emblems, if you please—if only the driving rain will permit us to see them—emblems of the benefits conferred by the wealth of the great city, open spaces, Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches, with wood rangers, hawking parties, shepherds, and shepherdesses: here is Education, far more handsome, genial, and smiling, than she generally appears to her enforced votaries; here is Charity distributing her dole; nurses to bind up the wounds of the suffering,

emblems of the far-reaching beneficence of our noble hospitals. But for all this does anyone care of all the loose disorderly crowd that, hustling, yelling, screeching, whirls along in heedless turmoil?

Truly here is a contrast, if one could realise it, between such a hurly-burly as this, and the dignified, somewhat solemn function of earlier days. The first beginning of the stately progress of the Chief Magistrate of the City was to accompany His Lordship, not only in respect for him and his office, but to make sure of his coming back again in safety. It was in the last year of King John, or the first of his successor, that the first record of the practice appears, and at that time the City went solidly for the Magna Charta; Barons against the King and the Pope; and the march to Westminster was a display of force as well as an official pageant.

It was long after this—indeed just before the beginning of the Wars of the Roses—that the progress by water was first inaugurated. Then Sir John Norman built a richly ornamented barge for his own use, and the twelve great City Companies followed his example; and this, too, was something of a demonstration of the City's power over the river. The water progress continued till well into the present century; and as one of the most picturesque and taking features of the show, it seems a pity that it was ever abandoned. Now that the Embankment affords a fine and uninterrupted view of the river from Blackfriars to Westminster, it is to be regretted that there is so little to be seen on the grand historic stream. Even the once bustling traffic of the penny steamers is in danger of ceasing altogether; and the river from London Bridge to Lambeth, once gay with every kind of boat, with courtiers, cavaliers, and citizens in brave apparel, with pageants of all kinds, with games and water frolics, where sometimes a King might be seen in his gilded barge, on his way to the palace; sometimes a noble hurried along with muffled oars to Traitor's Gate and the frowning mysterious Tower—this gay, bright, and yet darksome and terrible river is abandoned now to tugs and coal barges, or now and then a noisy, fussy launch, or quiet, grim police boat. And what a quiet pleasant passage it would be for the incoming Lord Mayor! And if he could make up his mind to return the same way, what dangers to the peace of London and the safety of her peaceful citizens would be altogether avoided!

And recalling the old London streets, their quaint gables and overhanging timber structures, quiet often enough, and yet often surcharged with life; with nobles, citizens, apprentices, handsome City dames and pretty maidens, old greybeards in their starched ruffs, the liverymen in their gowns—all the quaint pageant passing through as a thing supremely respectable and desirable; ah! it is the chivalry of old as compared with the rough-and-tumble of a street row.

But even compared with the days of our youth, how great a change has come over the spirit of the scene! Advanced spirits might have criticised the affair with cynicism; but there, to old and young, was a pleasant, goodly show that all liked to look upon; a show with a flavour of Gog and Magog about it, with the men in veritable armour, even if sometimes they staggered and swayed in their saddles from the weight of it, and though the horses themselves might scarcely show the blood and bone of the knightly destrier.

Still, it was all delightful for the boys with their shining faces and great white collars! And what pretty girls they met, those boys! and how they all feasted together, in emulation of the Lord Mayor's banquet, and danced and flirted in those days before the deluge, the screaming, howling, roaring, blaspheming deluge: and then there was the drive home at night through the merry, glittering streets; not so bright with gas and electricity, but how much more radiant in the light of love and hope, and in the glow of the good time that was coming!

THREE CAROLINES.

"THE fierce light that beats upon a throne," has scorched up many reputations. Our Carolines suffered, as did our Catharines; but in a somewhat different way. For levity and indiscretion, Henry the Eighth had the axe and block; while George the Fourth employed a still much more cruel weapon, "the delicate investigation."

But against the first of our Carolines, her of Brandenburg Ansbach, no one ever breathed a word of scandal. Her early bringing up was not good for a girl. Her mother, widowed when she was four years old, married Elector John George of Saxony; and morals at Dresden were lower than at Louis the Fifteenth's Court,

without even the poor varnish of French refinement. John George was meditating open bigamy when he died in 1694, and his stepdaughter was taken in hand by Sophia Charlotte, daughter of the Electress Sophia of Hanover, and wife of Frederick the First of Prussia.

Sophia Charlotte was no ordinary woman; she was able to hold her own with her mother's friend, philosopher Leibnitz; and to her Caroline owed the philosophic bent which marked her in an especially frivolous age.

Of course the first thing to do with a German Princess, high-born, serene, a "durch-laucht" (light through and through), was to get her eligibly married. Then, as now, religion in such a case was a matter of indifference. So, when Archduke Charles, afterwards Emperor Charles the Sixth, and titular King of Spain, appeared as a possible suitor, Father Orban, a Jesuit, was set to prepare Caroline for the dignity of marrying into the House of Hapsburg. But Caroline had a will of her own, and, when argument failed, she disconcerted the good Jesuit with floods of tears; and she was backed up by her grandmother, the old Electress Sophia, who meant to marry her to her grandson, the Electoral Prince of Hanover. Leibnitz, too, aided her in resistance, dictating the letter in which she broke off the negotiations. So she married her Hanoverian, who, in due course, became our George the Second; "Providence," as Addison expresses it, "having kept a reward in store in order that such exalted virtue and pious firmness might not go unrequited even in this life." It seems to have been a love match; she was pretty and engaging, and small-pox, which attacked her two years after, did not destroy her charms. In politics, she was George Augustus's right hand.

Queen Anne was still alive; but the question of the succession was being fiercely debated, and George Augustus was much more anxious about it than his father, whom it more immediately concerned. Caroline studied the workings of parties, puzzling to one accustomed to the straightforward despotism of petty German Courts. It must have puzzled her, too, after the amiable laxity of German beliefs, to find people actually making religion a political weapon, and crying out against her as "a Calvinist, who would not take the Sacrament."

She may not have understood that sacrament-taking was an indispensable qualifica-

tion for any office, much more for that of Queen, and was probably scandalised to learn that men of openly irreligious lives, who never entered church at any other time, took it when they were made tax-collectors or clerks to justices.

The report was untrue. She, doubtless, conformed to English usage, and to talk of Leibnitz's pupil as a Calvinist is to misuse words. With her old master she still corresponded. When the Electress Sophia died, he had been handed over to her as a legacy, and was certainly not slighted. Indeed, everything proves that the Duchess of Orleans was right in saying, "Caroline has a heart—a rare thing as times go."

The quarrel between George the First and his son put her in an awkward position. George extended his anger to "cette diablesse Madame la Princesse," and turned them both out of St. James's Palace—in fact, he was planning to send them off to America. Caroline found the plan in his cabinet.

Richmond Lodge became, in her hands, a centre of attraction for wits and beauties. It had its "Merlin's Cave," a grotto with a library, and figures of Merlin and others, and Stephen Duck for librarian. Grottoes were the fashion. Pope's, at Twickenham, would nowadays be considered a very poor place, despite the "Cornish spars as bright as gems" sent by Dr. Borlase. But an artificial age was not exacting in such matters. Pope and Tickell sang its glories; Lord Harvey and Walpole wrote about it. The only fly in Caroline's ointment was the presence of Mrs. Howard, afterwards Lady Suffolk. Strangely enough, she was able to get on with this lady, and to retain the chief influence over her husband. Indeed, when, long after George Augustus had succeeded to the throne, he and his mistress quarrelled, Caroline wrote that she was "glad and sorry," fearing that the lady's successor might be unbearable. But though Caroline prudently tolerated Mrs. Howard, she was implacable towards those who, like Lord Bathurst, tried to form a Howard party. Sir Spencer Compton was to have been Prime Minister, but he had erred in this way; and, moreover, Walpole, who supplanted him, was really a far abler man, by taking up with him showed Caroline's insight. Besides, he offered the Queen a substantial reason for favouring him by promising to double the fifty thousand pounds a year which Compton had proposed as her

jointure. Her husband she managed thoroughly: first, by making herself beautiful for his sake; next, by her strange complaisance for his foibles; lastly, by the tact which made his immense vanity fancy that he was managing everything. It was Pope's—

Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most when she obeys.

The wits were puzzled at the admirable way in which they got on; her alkali, it was said, corrects the acid of his temper. She and he were thoroughly at one in hating their son Frederick. She refused to see him on her death-bed, an extreme way of treating a certainly unloveable child. English institutions, he used to praise, but not sincerely. To the last, she was a German Princess, "always partial to the Emperor, jealous of the prerogative, and as fond of troops as the King himself."

Her anxiety for Hanover led her more than once to try to worry Walpole into going to war.

It was a hard and joyless reign; and her one compensation was that she tried to influence every appointment. The King always made her regret when he went to Germany—another ground of quarrel with the Prince of Wales. During such times she took care to live quietly at Kensington, avoiding all display.

In appointing Bishops she was very active, though she could not get a see for her favourite, Dr. Samuel Clarke. For Bishops, as Bishops, she had scant reverence, roundly rebuking the whole Bench for opposing the Quakers' Tithe Bill; but for some of them, as individuals, she had a strong regard.

Butler's "Analogy" she used to have read to her while her hair was being dressed up in the preposterous fashion of the time.

Very few Queens, none in this country, have had weekly gatherings of learned men—Sherlock, Hoadley, Berkeley, Clarke—for reading and discussion. Clarke, by her wish, got into controversy with Leibnitz about time and space. "They are only imaginary existences," said the latter—"subjective" as we should say now-a-days. "No," replied Samuel Clarke, "that space and time really exist follows as a necessary consequence from the existence of God. To annihilate time and space is beyond even the power of Omnipotence." All this is poor stuff, worthy of Pope's sneer about "Clarke's high à priori road." But they were better than

play and scandal, and prove in Queen Caroline an appreciation of "culture," and a longing for better things than the ordinary growth of St. James's and the other Courts. She needed all the mental stimulus she could get, for her evenings she had to spend in "knotting," while the King sat by and railed against everything and everybody. "Main good at pumping," Walpole found she had become by dint of practice; a good hater, too; and a good dissembler; but patient almost beyond example among women, exercising her patience for the good of her husband and his subjects.

Horace Walpole says she thought too highly of her power of managing others, and hints that her plans were oftener seen through than she imagined. But Horace was her special aversion, though she thought so highly of his brother; and he knew it.

If, as they say, she never looked up after receiving a specially unkind letter from the Prince of Wales, we may agree with the Duchess of Orleans, that she had a heart.

Her spelling was as bad as that of the great French ladies of a generation earlier; for instance, one would hardly recognise Leibnitz's "Theodicé" under such a phonetic form as "Deodyces."

Her granddaughter, Caroline Matilda, posthumous child of the Prince of Wales, was married at fifteen to the Danish Prince Royal, afterwards Christian the Seventh, a feeble-minded, self-indulgent lad, who began by treating her coldly, and soon neglected her for others. His girl-wife's friends and advisers were all sent away, and in her loneliness she began to attach herself to Struensee, the King's physician, a confirmed lady-killer. He, at first, exerted himself honestly to bring the King and Queen to a better understanding; but when he was appointed Councillor and Reader to King and Queen, he thought the latter might help him to greatness. So, with Brandt, an ex-page, and Charles, Count of Rantzau, he compassed the fall of Minister Bernstorff, and the three formed a Government which was to give freedom to the Press and to effect many other reforms. For a while, Struensee seemed to have everything in his hands; he and Brandt were made Counts; his orders were declared to be as valid as if signed by the King. Altogether, except that it ended tragically, the situation was not unlike that in the novel called "King Otto." The Queen and Struensee set Mrs.

Grundt at defiance; she in her riding-habit, walking arm-in-arm with him past the corpse of the Queen Dowager, which was lying in state. The Court was full of his creatures; almost all "people of quality" kept away from it; and an eye-witness said it looked like a pack of servants, who, in their master's absence, were playing at high life below stairs.

Meanwhile, the people began to grow discontented. They had expected the reforms would bring about a golden age, and were disappointed. Brandt, too, unlike Struensee, who seems to have been severely upright in money matters, began to put his hands into the Royal treasury. Popular suspicion, once roused, began spreading the wildest rumours. The King was to be seized and imprisoned, and the Queen made Regent—an absurd change—for the presence of this poor specimen of a King, who was qualifying for delirium tremens, and could find no other fault with his sprightly wife, but "*elle est si blonde*," was of course a protection to the triumvirate. However, nothing came of the popular discontent; a riot of Norwegian sailors was put down; and it was only when the three began to quarrel, Brandt plotting to get rid of Struensee, and then Rantzau determining to overthrow them both, that they fell. The story goes that Sir R. Murray Keith, our envoy, offered Struensee a large sum of money if he would leave the kingdom; and that the Queen said: "If he goes I shall go too, and shall get my bread by singing. I know I've got a pleasant voice." As he would not go, the Queen Dowager, Juliana Maria, was won over by Rantzau showing her a forged conspiracy for putting her son off the throne. Her help made Rantzau strong enough to act, for it carried with it the guards who had mutinied at Christmas, but had been won back by her intervention. And so, in mid January, at a masked ball at the Palace, Struensee and Brandt, and their chief supporters were arrested, and Caroline and her little daughter were hurriedly driven to Kronberg, a castle near Elsinore. As she looked back she saw Copenhagen in a blaze of light; the people, in whose service Struensee had, at first, really worked hard, thus showed their joy at the fall of Queen and favourite. Keith did not desert her, advising her, when a Commission began—a parallel to our Prince Regent's "delicate inquiry"—not to answer, but to dispute the authority of the Court. Her daughter's

legitimacy was satisfactorily established; while as to her guilt—well, at last Struensee, probably under torture, confessed; but about her there are the most contradictory reports.

Everything respecting her, during this stay at Kronberg, is open to doubt; except the two facts that she affectionately nursed her daughter through measles, and that she was preached to by a succession of Court divines. Her letters to her brother George are said to be unauthentic; so is the statement that she confessed on being assured that her doing so would save Struensee's life. Her advocate, Uldall, says she strongly asserted her innocence. Guilty, or not guilty, she was condemned; her marriage declared null and void; and her name struck out of the Prayer Book; while Struensee and Brandt were of course put to death. George the Third at first threatened; but afterwards he was persuaded that things had best be taken quietly. The public, however, made his apathy a ground for bullying Lord North's Government; and when news came that Caroline was to be banished to Aalborg in Jutland, a squadron was ordered to sail for Copenhagen. A few hours before it weighed anchor, word arrived that Keith's advice had prevailed, and that Caroline was to be set free, retaining the title of Queen, and solaced with a pension of five thousand pounds a year. Three English frigates went to see her safely out of Danish waters; and she left Elsinore under a Royal salute, taking up her abode at Celle, near Hanover, where a Court was organised for her in due form by those Past Masters in Royal etiquette, the Hanoverian authorities. Here she had a theatre, a "*jardin français*," plenty of English books, and the company of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, a young traveller in search of adventure, who came as secret agent of a knot of exiled Danish nobles at Hamburg. Their object was to get up a revolution, and to restore Caroline and themselves. She was willing enough, but wished to get help and countenance from her brother. Wraxall posted off to London; but George was cautious. He would be delighted at their success; but, in his position, he really could not help them actively. Wraxall did not despair; and was still in London when news came of the Queen's death.

"Poison," said the gossips. "Inflammation of the throat," said the doctors. "Diphtheria," we should say; for she had

spent a good deal of time in dressing fantastically the death chamber of a page whom she kept more than a week "lying in state."

Is her death-bed letter to her brother asseverating her innocence, authentic, and did she at the last make a similar statement to her pastor? Anyhow, Pastor Lehzen published an edifying account; and Wraxall, in the "*Annual Register*," stoutly defended her. She may have been only injudicious; wholly unfit to stand in the fierce light that beats upon a throne; culpably regardless of Mrs. Grundy, as is shown by her penchant for male costume. A portrait at Copenhagen represents her riding like a man in "man's" dress.

Few private people can venture to act out the motto, which the Scotch laird put over his gate: "Men say: what say they? Who cares what they say?" Certainly no Royalties can do so, as the third of our Carolines also found to her cost. She, Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, of Brunswick Wolfenbüttel, must have been a very fascinating girl. Fond of children, she would stop in her walks to pet them. Everybody who has written about her says what a kind, good-hearted child she was. The Duke of York was so charmed with what he saw of her at her father's Court, that he recommended her as a suitable bride for the Prince of Wales. The nation wanted an heir to the throne; and the Prince wanted his debts paid. So a bargain was struck; his income was raised from sixty thousand pounds to one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds, of which twenty-five thousand pounds were to be set aside to pay the six hundred and thirty thousand pounds which he owed. Then he was to have twenty-seven thousand pounds for wedding expenses, twenty-eight thousand pounds for jewels and plate, and twenty-six thousand pounds to complete Carlton House. A pretty good bribe, that, considering the value of money a century ago, even for a Prince by no means disposed to matrimony—already married, in a good many people's eyes, to Mrs. Fitzherbert. His bride was to have a jointure of fifty thousand a year. How they voted away the public money in those good old days!

Caroline Amelia was moderate. Her father's Court, though as gay and lively as most North German Courts have always been stiff and dull, was not expensive; and she positively refused to have more than thirty-five thousand pounds a year settled on her.

In those days, even Royal brides were at

the mercy of winds and waves, and hostile fleets; and from New Year's Day, 1795, till the end of March, Caroline waited patiently at Hanover, till weather and the French permitted her escort to sail. When she got to Greenwich, Lady Jersey was, with a cynicism of which only His Royal Highness could have displayed, sent to meet her. "Who is Lady Jersey?" she would naturally ask; and scandal—telling the truth for once—would reply: "The reigning favourite, bound therefore to be your implacable enemy, and to do her best to estrange you and your husband from the very outset." This was on the fifth of April; three days later the marriage took place at Saint James's, at eight at night; the Prince, says scandal—perhaps falsely this time—calling out to Lord Malmesbury when he first set eyes on her: "Harris, bring me a glass of brandy," as if the sight was so unpleasant as to need a restorative.

Next January the Princess Charlotte was born, and His Royal Highness straightway got a deed of separation, Heaven only knows on what pretext, and Caroline went to live at Shooter's Hill, and then at Montague House, Blackheath. Her "Court" included Sir John Douglas and his wife (a spy), Sir Sidney Smith, Captain Manby, and a few others; and she began to display her old fondness for children by "adopting" and bringing up several. Lady Douglas said she had heard that one of them was her own son; and in consequence Lord Ellenborough and others were set to make the "delicate investigation." Of course, they found it was all idle gossip; Caroline was indiscreet, and given to "think aloud," that was all. The old King was very kind, gave her rooms in Kensington Palace, and often came out with his grandchild to Blackheath to spend a day with her, thereby yet more enraging his implacable Royal Highness.

Princess Amelia, another of her friends, was dead; and she began to be cut off from intercourse with her daughter. Her husband was proclaimed Regent, but she was not even mentioned in the proclamation. At last, in 1813, came the crisis. Mother and daughter had for some time been wholly debarred from meeting, when by accident they met while out driving. His Royal Highness was enraged, and told his daughter—who had also angered him by refusing the Prince of Orange—that he should dismiss all her household, and bring her to Carlton House. She rushed out, jumped into a hackney coach, and drove to her mother. Caroline, however, was spirit-

broken; and when Miss Mercer, and Lord Liverpool, and the Duke of York, and Lord Eldon, and a Bishop had all tried to persuade the girl to obey her father, she too—advised by Lord Brougham—joined her voice with theirs, and mother and daughter were again separated, the latter being hidden away at Cranbourn Lodge, in Windsor Park.

Cut off from her daughter's society, Caroline went abroad, and fell under the influence of the Bergamis. Of these, Bartolomeo had been on General Pino's staff, and Murat offered him a captain's commission, which he refused, preferring the Princess's employment. His brothers became her major-domo and "privy purse"; his sister, Countess Oldi, her lady of honour. For Bartolomeo she bought a barony in Sicily, got him made Knight of Malta and of the Order of St. Caroline, which she instituted, undismayed by the breakdown of a similar Order founded by her aunt-in-law, Christian of Denmark's wife. With this suite she travelled in a fantastic style over half Europe, and then went to Jerusalem, her entry into which was like a carnival procession. All the way she was dogged by His Royal Highness's spies, who, every now and then, tried to seize her papers. George the Third died in 1820, but she (whose name had been left out of the Prayer Books) was never officially informed of it; and at Rome—where she happened to be at the time—they refused her a guard of honour. She was on her way to England. "Stay away, never call yourself Queen, or use any title belonging to the Royal Family, and you shall have fifty thousand pounds a year," were George's terms. But she persisted in coming; and the guns of Dover Castle, no orders having been given to the contrary, gave her a Royal salute. The Londoners took her part with enthusiasm; and Alderman Wood, in whose house she stayed, became the most popular man in the City.

The King met her return by a Bill for Divorce and a charge of adultery with Bergami. It is a wretched story; she had behaved with a levity which would have been unbecoming even in the days when the Duke of York found her a lively, romping, bare-shouldered girl, in her father's rather disreputable Court. She had been indiscreet enough, Heaven knows; but the witnesses were bad enough to make one certain of her innocence, and the evidence was cooked in the most discreditable way. So the matter stands.

The second reading of the Deprivation and Divorce Bill was passed, when suddenly Lord Liverpool announced that he should not proceed to a third reading. Was he moved by Brougham's able defence? Or did Government fear that, if she were found guilty, there would be a popular rising?

Her visit to St. Paul's, to return thanks for her acquittal, was a triumphal procession. No soldiers. "The Queen's guards are the People," was the motto on the banner. Temple Bar was duly closed, and when she reached it, it was opened, as if for Royalty, by the Lord Mayor, who then accompanied her to the Cathedral. Then followed the King's coronation, and her attempt to gain admission. Had she persisted, a riot would have ensued; but she went quietly off, broken down by what was her death-blow. Soon after, she was taken ill at the theatre, and was dead in a week. Even then she did not rest. Her wish was to be taken to the family vault at Brunswick. The Londoners were anxious that her body should go through the City.

"No," said the King, and sent the escort of Life Guards which he had always denied her while alive. The Londoners gained their point; but not till there had been a fight at Hyde Park Corner, in which the soldiers fired on and killed several of "the mob."

England, one feels sure, cannot have been wholly wrong, and England went with her almost with one mind.

"God bless you! We'll bring your husband back to you," said a working man to her.

The tears streamed down her cheeks as she told the story to Lady Charlotte Bury. They could not do that; but they gave her their love, and let us hope she deserved it.

And His Royal Highness—so remorselessly cruel to her—is nothing to be said for him? He was, to begin with, the most spoiled of all spoiled boys. They began by calling him Prince Florizel, and extolling his beauty and his fine voice. He naturally grew up a monster of selfishness, spending ten thousand pounds a year on his coats, cutting old friends with as little compunction as he ill-treated his wife. Yet they say of him—as they do of Nero—that two or three people, mostly servants, loved him; and the one story told to his credit is that, when a groom was found out oat stealing, and turned off by the head of the stables, the Prince talked to him very kindly, reinstated him, and made him promise to sin no more—a promise which he kept.

Sad that he could not have bestowed a little kindness on the most unhappy of all our Carolines!

POOR FOLK.

A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

By the Author of "*David Ward*," "*The Story of a Sorrow*," "*A Dreadful Misalliance*," etc. etc.

CHAPTER III.

THAT Mrs. Rayne had believed Tom's story had not appeared credible to Mr. Lipsilt, hence, the brutal crudity of his announcement. It was somewhat Mr. Lipsilt's way to speak in haste, and repent afterwards, and his attention to Mrs. Rayne, as she recovered consciousness, was most fatherly, though tinged with that habitual contempt of his for the follies of the poor.

"To swallow a cock-and-bull story like that, and keep that young blackguard loafing about the house all this time!" Mr. Lipsilt said to himself, with a slow shake of the head. "I wonder did she believe him, or did she only tell herself she believed him?" which question it would have needed a more skilful, mental analyst than Mr. Lipsilt to answer.

"Why did you not prosecute him?" was Mrs. Rayne's first articulate question.

"You mean, why did not Mr. Studd prosecute him?" Mr. Lipsilt had dismissed the observant clerk with a motion of the hand. "I bought Tom off with a trifle for your sake," blushing actually as he admitted this weak-minded artifice. "I thought if he took the lesson to heart it would do him good, and need not hinder his making another start."

"I wonder what will become of him," she said in her dull, despondent way. "He is too old to take out new indentures."

"Yes, and I know too much now to recommend him. But it was folly to think of a trade for him; put him to labour. There are thousands of labouring men in steady work all the year round, and besides, the labourer is really the bone and sinew of the country." Mr. Lipsilt could hardly help regarding other people's troubles from an abstract and reflective point of view.

"I don't think he would wish to labour," was the slow answer.

"I am sure not, but I should make him."

"How?" This simple question stag-

gered the wise man, and he relapsed into the vague again.

"Be firm with him, show him what you expect of him."

"Yes, and he will show me what he expects of me, and I shall probably see more clearly."

"Oh, if you choose to be so weak-minded——" dismissing the subject.

He could not help her; no one could help her. The sorrow was her own, and she must bear it; but it was hard.

Young Tom had already descended to a deeper depth than his father had ever reached, or at least she thought so, for towards strangers old Tom had always been honest.

She could not tell her son what she had discovered—which Mr. Lipsitt would have characterised as more of her weak-mindedness—but she could not keep the chill of a new disgust out of her bearing.

"I wonder has she heard?" Tom asked himself, but did not push surmise the length of investigation. If she had discovered everything, the culprit was of opinion that it did not matter very much, since she had no power to punish him.

"My own children are all worthless," the poor woman told herself, unconsciously binding her affections more closely round her nursing.

She had not answered Elsie's letter, nor taken any notice of the tidings she had had from home. Her mother was dead—gone, therefore, beyond the reach of reproach or pardon. As to what she had left behind her, "Let them keep it," Mrs. Rayne said to herself bitterly. "It is not likely to bring them a blessing; but, if it does, my grudging it won't matter."

Mrs. Rayne's ideas of blessings were a little confused. She had always striven for what she called blessings, and they had eluded her; and yet, in spite of her own experiences, she clung to the belief, inculcated in her childhood, that wrong-doing is punished even in this world, and that right, in spite of everything, is best.

Of her disappointment in the matter of the money from home she did not speak to anyone. What was the use? If her father had only appointed an executor to the will other than her mother, the thing that was done would have been impossible; but, since he had omitted this, there was nothing more to be said. Mrs. Rayne did not believe in stirring in stagnant waters. Her pain and disappointment dropped like

a cold, dead thing into the silent depths of her heart, and lay hidden there.

The winter seemed colder than ever that year, and poor, paralytic Tom suffered sorely for want of the flannels she had been unable to procure him. Young Tom, too, hung over the small fire in an uncomfortable, suffering way, and the mother's heart, despite its indignation, was not proof against his pain. Of course, she did her best, mending and patching and darning for them all; but threadbare clothing, however tidy, is powerless against the incisiveness of a black frost. And Gordon helped her a good deal with his deft, quick fingers; but, as young Tom assured him contemptuously, fiddling over woman's work is not earning money. Like other ne'er-do-weels, Tom was very impatient of uselessness in any but himself.

"Gordon saves money, if he does not earn it," Mrs. Rayne said always in answer, "and what would father do without him?"

"Oh, father!"

Tom had his own opinion of the merit in father's claims.

But these claims relaxed their weak hold a month or two later. In the cold dawn of a spring morning the angel of Death passed by the poor rooms the Raynes inhabited, and the invalid's sleep merged into that which knows no awaking.

A pauper funeral, that was all they could give poor Tom; but tears as bitter as were ever shed for rank or worth, fell by the grave. All the selfishness of his young manhood, all the tyrannies of his middle age, were forgotten now. There are natures from which a little tardy gentleness effaces completely all recollection of half a lifetime of wrong. As she saw the clay fall on his coffin, Tom Rayne's widow remembered and mourned him as he had been in the early days when she had believed in him.

As to Gordon, he could recall nothing of Tom but kindness—little services undertaken on his behalf; little games suggested by him, in which there lay unending treasures of quiet enjoyment. And then those wonderful stories of Tom's, how could Gordon ever forget them—stories of far-off lands, rich in clever people, rich in friendship, rich in gold?

"When I'm a man," Gordon thought—drawing in a deep breath at the words—"when I'm a man——!"

It was strange how they all missed Tom; and yet not strange either, since it is always those who have demanded most of us who

leave the greatest blank in our lives. His presence in the poor little room; his querulous voice, reminding them of his needs and the hundred trifling sacrifices that his condition rendered imperative. These were all ended now. Tom, junior, could have the best seat by the fire, and Gordon could go to school again; and Mrs. Rayne no longer needed to stint her meals lest the invalid should hunger for some more tempting morsel.

"Gordon should be put to work now," Tom—called young Tom still from force of habit—ventured, about a week after his father's funeral.

"He must go back to school; he has never had a chance at school," Mrs. Rayne answered evasively.

"Neither had I," young Tom said sulkily.

"And you have not come to much," was on the mother's lips to answer, but she repressed it. There was no good in fanning the smouldering embers of discord. Whatever young Tom might be, he was her son, and she believed, wisely or unwisely, that she was bound to bear with him. And then she had a kind of lingering hope that her influence and example would move him one day. "Surely he, a big, bulky, brawny man, could not let his mother, already on the declining side of life, toil and labour for him always, without some dawning sense of shame."

It was not in Mrs. Rayne's nature to think the very worst of anyone, and when she began to tell herself that Tom missed his father, she found in his sorrow some faint gleam of promise.

Tom was certainly more morose than he had been; more exacting towards her; more tyrannous towards Gordon; and the connexion between sorrow for the dead and unkindness towards the living is not very close; but even that a mother can see when she looks for it.

"I don't think it is any good waiting to hear from Mr. Studd," she said one day timidly, when the summer had come round again. "I really think Tom you had better look out for some other kind of work."

"A fellow gets so little for working," Tom answered, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Yes; but as you grow more skilled you would be better paid, and besides I am not able to support you," she added fretfully.

"Of course not, seeing how much the

little shaver costs you; but, I suppose, that don't matter when you've a fancy for him. Why don't you put him to work, he could earn a lot of money with his wheedling ways?"

"I should like to put him into good service—that was all the plan I had for him long ago; but lately I've been thinking that he might teach in the Board School—he's so sharp. It is nice work, they say, and well paid; and—" But she stopped suddenly, frightened by the scowl on her son's face.

"You would make a gentleman of that beggar's brat, while any kind of work is good enough for me," he said savagely.

"I have tried to do the best I was able for you too," the poor woman answered despondently.

That night, for the first time, Gordon felt the weight of Tom's fist. Hitherto, some lingering sense of honour had restrained him from lifting his hand against a creature so defenceless and harmless; but he had always been jealous of Gordon, in the pampered days when he had been paid for, as well as in later times when Tom had found him useless and in the way.

In any moral descent, the first step is always the most difficult. Tom's first assault on the child was a sudden blow given in haste. Later, Gordon became the safety-valve for all Tom's ill-humours. Not that the child always took his punishments patiently; his sense of justice revolted against attacks which were as unprovoked as they were cowardly; but his resistance only whetted the edge of Tom's tyranny. To give pain to a passive thing is poor pleasure; to torture anything that writhes and resists is a beautiful pastime to men like young Tom Rayne. And the beauty of it was that Gordon never complained; never dared to do so, lest he should wound mother. And Tom found delight of the richest kind in forcing Gordon to be polite to him in her presence.

"You great hulking tyrant; if mother knew how you treat me you would not dare to do it," the boy had panted once with flaming eyes.

"Mother! She's none of your mother," Tom had answered, jeeringly. "You're just a beggar's brat that she fancied to keep out of the workhouse."

"That is a lie, and you know it is," Gordon said, trembling.

"Oh, is it? Then you had better ask her."

But this Gordon did not dare to do, possibly from dread of having the statement verified.

At this period Gordon absolutely loathed Tom with the loathing that feels like murder. To know him so selfish, so base, so cruel, and then to have to tolerate him, to obey him, even to sleep with him!

And only a few little months ago father had been alive, and the world was beautiful and full of love. In his grief, rendered more bitter by hatred, the child kept away from home all he could, spending the mornings at the Board School, and often passing the rest of the day hungrily hanging about the streets till he knew the mother's day's work would be over and she at home again. And then he dared not confess that he had had no food all the day, lest it should grieve her.

"I wonder would she be very sorry if I ran away for good?" he asked himself sometimes desperately. "If I am not her own child it must be hard for her to keep me; and if I went away I could grow rich and come back to take care of her when she is old."

Like wiser people Gordon justified his idea and found it reasonable, once it had taken hold of him.

And those long empty afternoons fostered his craving for adventure and far lands. He had found his way to London Bridge, and used to stand leaning over its low parapet, and watching the heavily laden steamers threading their way noisily up and down the river.

"Where are these vessels going?" Gordon would ask himself, with a beating heart.

People noticed Gordon's eager, little, sharp face often; those of his own rank of life spoke to him sometimes; and an old man, lame of one foot, who sold oranges near the bridge, became quite friendly with him. To him Gordon confided, after a time, his interest in those busy crowded steamers, and was told that they were only river boats taking excursionists to Gravesend or Greenwich, and that the sea-going vessels sailed from a place called the Docks.

"There are the East India Docks, that is where the Australian ships starts from," the old man said in a reflective, mumbling voice. "I know, 'cos I saw my Jim aboard when 'e went out to the gold-fields."

"The gold fields," Gordon echoed, his heart giving a great throb, and the colour mounting into his eager little face.

"Ay, and 'e might 'ave grown rich, for he was doin' well, sent me money reglar, an' gold in the rough that a might see what it looked like; but 'e took fever an' died, Jim did. Eb, but 'twas a pity," muttering to himself in a pensive, senile way.

"I should like to see a vessel bound for Australia," Gordon said, his heart fluttering in her breast.

So the old orange-vendor told him the way to the Docks, and saw him off, threading his course rapidly through the crowds of vehicles and pedestrians, as only a little London boy can. Then the old man sighed, and shook his head without exactly knowing why.

Policemen were keeping guard at the Saint Katharine Docks, and these Gordon passed respectfully, with all a City Arab's dread of "the beaks," and hurried on with vision keenly on the alert.

Opposite the office of the Board of Trade, he had noticed a little crowd of merchant sailors waiting to be hired. He knew what they were, and had a kind of idea that their talk would be of the sea and ships, and so crept near them to listen. But they saw him and chased him, swearing at him a little, though more as a matter of habit than of ill-nature.

By-and-by he was at the East India Docks, and a great monster, large as a palace, larger than anything he had ever dreamed of, was lying lazily at anchor, while cargo was being swung by great cranes into the hold, and people were leisurely crossing the gangway.

"Here, youngster, take this aboard."

It was a man, encumbered by several parcels, who had spoken; and Gordon startled, stood with parted lips staring up into his face.

"Are you deaf? Take hold here," and, as in a dream, Gordon crossed the gangway and stood on deck.

"Now then, that is all right, you may clear off now, and here is sixpence for your trouble."

"Do you soon sail?" Gordon asked timidly.

"In half an hour."

"And you are going to Australia?"

"To Melbourne straight. Would you like to go?"

"Wouldn't I just."

"Then come along. Hide yourself away somewhere; the ship is big enough."

"If it was not for mother," the child answered, with a cry in his voice; and

then, covering his ears with his hands, as though to shut out the tempter, he sped back to shore, and, running as if for dear life, hid himself in the heart of the City. The passion of travel was in all his veins now, and the breath of the sea was on his lips thenceforwards, even in his dreams.

Once a week a Melbourne-bound vessel sailed away from the East India Dock; and once a week Gordon was always there, gliding furtively past the Cerberus who kept the gate, and feeling all his heart go out from him when the vessel lifted anchor. His very soul craved for the gorgeous and impossible beauty of the land to which she sailed.

"If it was not for mother," he said to himself always; and that name was a talisman which kept him faithful to what he thought his duty.

Home was growing more unlovely daily; but mother was there sometimes, and wished him there always, and that was enough.

And then one day suddenly Mrs. Rayne told him what she thought good tidings. One of her patrons had bought a country house; and she, with other charwomen, were to prepare it for the reception of the family.

"My fare will be paid there and back; and I shall be put on board wages. But best of all, I shall see green fields again," she said.

"And you will take me with you," he said, clutching her feverishly, while his eyes grew large and solemn.

"I could not, dear son, you would be of no use," she answered regretfully.

"Oh yes, I would; you know how smart I am, and I am not lazy; you would be sure to find me useful."

But Mrs. Rayne sorrowfully persisted in her refusal: his fare would be expensive, and she would have to pay it, and his work was not such as would be required at Appleholme. "But I shall come back as soon as ever I can," she added, "and meantime, you will be a good boy."

And poor little Gordon, who had no one to advise him, no one with whom he could discuss all his difficulties, answered, from the depths of his sorrowful heart: "How can I tell at times what is being good?"

And Mrs. Rayne, not understanding, kissed him, and told him he was always good.

He went with her to the railway station and saw her get her ticket, and accompanied her to the gate that separated intending travellers from their friends. "I'll be back in a week," she said, stooping to kiss him, "and if not I shall send for you."

He looked up at her with dim, swollen eyes, and his face grew sharp and weird as he answered, "You are leaving me, mother. I don't think I should ever have been able to leave you."

It was hours after before he reached home, and the short autumn evening had closed in, and a dense fog had risen and was creeping noiselessly through the streets.

Tom had brought in a friend or two for the evening, and Gordon had been much needed to run on an errand to the beershop, perhaps also to supply the funds for the necessary refreshment, for Tom had a shrewd idea that his mother had not left Gordon penniless.

In his absence Tom had been obliged to fetch the beer himself, and in a very minute quantity, contrary to all codes of dignity and hospitality. But the guests, in their turn, had stood treat; so that, before Gordon appeared, Tom was quarrelsomely tipsy.

When the child's white face looked in at the door, he rose with an oath, and strode towards him.

"See if I don't teach you to mend your idle, loafing ways!" he said.

But before the outstretched hand had time to seize him, the boy turned with a sob and ran into the mist.

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THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF
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have been."

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcootes," etc.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IT was the quietness with which he took it that hurt her most. If he had stormed, raged, blustered, as he would certainly have done at an earlier period of his history, she could better have borne it; but this dumb acquiescence hurt her with a double portion of pain.

"I never did him an ill turn," he said, and that was all. The wound was too deep for anger; he suffered it in a brooding silence, not understanding how it came to be dealt him.

"What did I do?" he asked Tilly once. "He said my life was an offence to him. I knew well enough I wasn't fit for the company he keeps; I've learned that since I came here, and he needn't have feared. I would never have disgraced him or you—"

"Oh, hush, hush," she cried, putting her arms about him, and hiding her face on his breast, "let us forget it—let us put it away."

But he could not put it away, or forget it—or begin again as if the past had never been. All his hopes lay in ruins at his feet; his boastfulness was stripped from him; it needed all the strength he had to go on living.

It was a cruel road he had travelled since he came to London, meaning to conquer and compel the world to his will. His wealth was everything to him: it stood in place of culture, and education, and early tradition, and good descent. It was his

value on it which a man does on anything for which he has sweated laboriously. The hard years of his life; his sparing youth; his rough manhood; all these went to the making of his fortune; and when prosperity came at last it was so gross and palpable, and he so conscious of it, that it was little wonder he should count upon it making a deep impression on others.

The first blow to his pride came with the slow-growing conviction that it did not impress others. In the boarding-house he was nobody. A beggarly officer on half-pay, a poor struggling scribbler, held themselves better than he. They breathed a finer air; they talked of things he could not understand; they suffered him pleasantly enough because they were gentlemen; but they did not seek him out; and he knew very well that for all their grinding poverty they would not have exchanged their birthright of culture for his abounding wealth.

And now it seemed that the money could not even buy the liking and respect of a young fellow, towards whom he had meant nothing but good. The burning sense of Fred's contempt dwelt with him all day; it stung him afresh every time he tried dumbly to ask what he had done to deserve it.

In the afternoon when Behrens came, by appointment, to arrange the final formalities that were to give him power, Mr. Barton was unable to see him. He had no wish to withdraw from the arrangement, but the zest and spring of desire were gone. His plans, dreams, and ambitions lay shattered about him, and he had no strength to piece the fragments into any new shape.

He looked so ill that Tilly—fearing that he might yield to the other's urgency—ran down herself to see Mr. Behrens.

The hot flame of her indignation that had made her feel strong enough for any call last night was still glowing within her, and it made her errand easy.

Behrens was conscious of some subtle change in her when she came into the room. It seemed as if this young girl—whose gay and smiling ways had had their attraction for him—were of a sudden converted into a grave woman, whose opposition, if she chose to exercise it, might be formidable.

"My uncle cannot see you to-day," she said. "He is ill; he is unable to leave his room."

"My business with him will not occupy five minutes," said Behrens, concealing some natural annoyance. "I have come, by his appointment, at some inconvenience to myself."

"I regret that," she said gravely; "but I am afraid it cannot alter his decision. He can see no one to-day."

"It is not absolutely necessary that I should see him, though of course I should prefer it; if you will kindly procure his signature to this paper, I shall ask no more to-day."

"Not to-day, please," she said. "He has had—a great trouble."

"A trouble?" Behrens rapidly reviewed a dozen possibilities of catastrophe. Anything to do with his investments? No, that was absurd. They were secure enough as yet.

"A family trouble," she went on, seeing he waited for an explanation. "It has been a great shock and grief to him."

A family trouble was easily supported by Mr. Behrens; but the thought that it should be allowed to hinder his business accentuated his annoyance.

"Excuse me, Miss Burton," he said, "but I think you do not do well to place any hindrance—however kindly you may mean it—in the way of business. The matter is of graver importance than a young lady may possibly understand."

"It is not I who hinder," she answered with some haughtiness. "My uncle will faithfully keep any engagement he has made with you; he would observe his promise even if it were to his own hurt," she said with a sudden remembrance of John Temple's warning. "He bade me say that he would see you to-morrow, without fail. You may count on his keeping his word."

It is hard to remain perfectly amiable when your interests are attacked, and

Behrens felt that he was being badly used, but he preserved an outward calm.

"Since you guarantee it, I feel sure of it," he said; and he took his hat to go.

"Mr. Behrens——" she said.

He turned at the door; but it was a moment before she could go on. She spoke with an effort.

"I don't know distinctly what your business with my uncle is. I don't suppose I should understand it if you told me."

He stood smiling a little at her embarrassment before he took pity on her. She was not very formidable after all.

"You might not understand the details," he said, "but you will understand the result. It will make you even more envied than you are now."

She passed this by as if it were not worth noticing. "If he were to lose his money now," she said, "he would have nothing else left."

"If he loses his money I shall lose mine," said Behrens, still amiable. "That may be some guarantee to you that I shall act in good faith."

Somehow his words, or the honourable air with which he clothed them, made her feel suddenly ashamed.

"I was very silly to meddle," she said to herself as she ran upstairs; "as if he would change his plans at a word from a girl like me!"

It is amazing how one trouble deadens the sting of another: we cannot feel two aches acutely at one time, and the loss of money seemed to Tilly a very endurable evil at this moment. Its sweetness had been so effectually wrung from it, that it seemed a comparatively easy thing to relinquish the dross that was left.

"It seems to me," said Honoria Walton to the drawing-room group that evening, "that there has been a big earthquake on the first floor."

"An earthquake!" cried the ladies. "What do you mean?" Honoria would have liked very well to use the occasion to be enigmatical, but her news was too urgent.

"An earthquake that has swallowed up Mr. Frederic Temple, and shaken Mr. Paul Behrens more than he enjoys. I met him coming downstairs this afternoon, and the words he was saying under his breath were, I feel sure, not words of benediction."

"I met him, too, quite by accident," said Mrs. Moxon, looking shocked, "and he behaved to me in quite a gentlemanly manner."

"I met him on purpose," said Honoria calmly; "perhaps he prefers to be met by accident."

"Do you think he and Mr. Burton have quarrelled?" Mrs. Drew asked gravely.

"I don't think he is the kind of person to quarrel. He might hate in an inward way; but he would never get it out comfortably. I don't know, however, that it would be the less disagreeable to be hated by him on that account."

"Honoria, you are talking very wildly, my child," began Mrs. Drew gently.

"She is talking in a very unladylike manner," came icily from Mrs. Moxon.

Honoria looked from one to the other of them.

"You both mean the same thing, I suppose," she said; "but I must try to endure your reproaches, because you'll see I shall turn out to be quite right. Mr. Behrens has simply felt a slight shock, and it will take a good big wave to knock him over. As for Mr. Frederic Temple, he is already swallowed up and done for, and we shall not see him here again."

"Are you sure, Honoria?"

"No, I am not sure. How can I be sure when I have not been told anything? But I have eyes, and I can use them. I believe," she turned upon Mrs. Drew, "you are going to begin to be sorry for the young man."

"No," said Mrs. Drew, with some spirit. "I'll wait until I have some cause."

"Well," said Honoria, "you've been sorry for the other one—the cousin—so long, that it is quite time the cousin's cousin had a turn. As for Mr. John Temple, I fancy we shall see him here very soon, and you won't be required to sigh any more on his account."

She would say no more, and it must be admitted that her guesses, if they were unaided, were pretty shrewd; but on one point she was in error: Mr. John Temple was never again received as a guest at Yarrow House.

After a day that dragged itself away in a slow monotony of discomfort, the morning broke a little more cheerfully. Tilly, at least, assured herself that Fred Temple was not worth a second day of grief: her feeling towards him was one of abiding indignation and hot scorn, and she caught herself now and then thrilling with an exultant sense of freedom which was immediately quenched in shame when she looked at her uncle.

"He cared for him," she said to herself,

"and I did not, and that makes all the difference. If I had loved him, perhaps I'd have expected less of him; perhaps even have made excuses for him now." But that view of the question seemed so impossible, that in a sudden revolt she fed the flame of her anger till it glowed anew.

Mr. Burton looked as if he had slept badly, and his face was lined and seamed; but he talked without reference to yesterday's events, and he seemed to suffer a faint revival of interest in his breakfast.

The day was sunny and warm, and he noticed its brightness. "I think I'll go along to the house," he said; "there's plenty to see to."

"You will let the workmen go on?" she said, with a fear at her heart.

It concerned her pride and her anger against Fred that the house should be finished, and that his desertion should make no difference in their plans.

"Do you want to live in it?" he asked.

"Yes. I think we can't do better than get into it as soon as possible."

She had shrunk from the thought of the big, dreary mansion before; now she was eager to inhabit it. If she could rouse him to the old interest in his wealth, part of the score against Fred would be wiped out.

"Well, they can finish it, and, if we don't care about living in it, we can let it be. It won't hurt to keep it shut up awhile."

"We'd better get it all ready, at any rate," she said, speaking with determined cheerfulness. "I've set my heart on giving a house-warming in that big drawing-room; I've even had thoughts of coaxing Cousin Spencer up to town—think of that!"

He looked at her in a dull kind of wonder.

"Lass," he said, "I believe you had no real love for him in your heart?"

"No," she assented, hanging her head. "I have searched it, and I find I had none. I thought I had; but it isn't there."

"Well," he said, as if the thought had a struggle to be clear, "that makes it easier."

"Yes; easier and harder. A great deal harder to forgive him."

"I've been thinking," he went on, "that maybe he was counting on that money?"

"Undoubtedly," she said, with a renewal of scorn, "he was counting on the money, though he was willing to take me

with it. But," she went on, reading the struggling thought in his face, "there isn't any way of giving him any, even to help him out of difficulties that his marriage was to smooth away. He couldn't take it now, and, even if he could, I wouldn't let you give it, dear. We must leave him alone. He has left us each other. We want nothing more but just to be together, you and I."

He seemed to acquiesce. He got up out of his chair, moving stiffly.

"I'll just daunder along by myself," he said.

He reached out a hand and felt along the mantelpiece for his pipe. She filled it and gave it to him.

"You'd better leave word that, if Behrens should call, he'll find me there, if I'm not back before he comes. And you'll come, my lass, when ye're ready!"

"Oh yes, I'll come," she said. "Do you think I'm going to let you choose the papers alone? We were to settle the decorations to-day, and it's most important that I should be there."

"I'll just take a look round," he said, "and I'll fix on nothing till you come."

She saw that he wished to go alone, and she went with him to the door to see him set out. The day had ripened into brilliant sunshine, and its cheer inauspiciously comforted her. Her heart was following him very tenderly as she watched him down the quiet street. He walked slowly, and the spring gaiety seemed to flow past him as if he were an alien and had no share in it.

At the corner he turned and waved a hand to the girl standing out on the pavement, heedless of Mrs. Moxon and the proprieties. She waved back again, both hands fluttering out to him.

The day looked even brighter when he turned the corner and vanished, as if his forlorn, bent figure were somehow a reproach to its radiance.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

DECEMBER.

OF all the months of the year there is not a month one-half so welcome to the young, or so full of happy associations, as the last month of the year, yet it teems with "dies mals," on which it is highly "dangerous to begin or take anything in hand, or to take a journey, or any such thing." Of its thirty-one days, no less than seven are black; but the blackest of

all is the last Monday, because on this day Judas Iscariot was born. In the two calendars from which these days are selected, both the fifteenth and seventeenth are marked as fatal; but, in addition, the sixth, seventh, ninth, sixteenth, and twenty-second are equally bad, according to one or other calendar. Fortunately the remainder of the month is allowed to run its course without danger.

Notwithstanding the ill-luck with which the course of the month is marked, it is gratifying to note that

If cold December gave you birth—
The month of snow, and ice, and mirth—
Place on your hand a turquoise blue,
Success will bless whate'er you do.

The stone prescribed to be worn in this month, in order to ensure success in all undertakings, is the ruby, which is said to "discover poison, and ensure the cure of all evils springing from the unkindness of friends."

Following births, in the natural order of things, we have marriages, and it may interest those who wish to marry to know that the luckiest day and month for marriages is by superstitious people held to be the thirty-first of December. This superstition is specially prevalent in Scotland, and some years ago, as the result of researches, it was ascertained that, while in the eight principal towns in Scotland the number of marriages averaged twenty-five per day, on the thirty-first of December there were, as a rule, as many as five hundred. Probably, this may be accounted for by the fact that "Advent, marriage doth deny," and the season being ended, enthusiastic couples make up for lost time.

In the time of Romulus December was the tenth month of the year, hence is derived the portion of the word "Decem" (ten); it was under the protection of the goddess Vesta. By Romulus December was assigned thirty days; this was reduced to twenty-nine by Numa, and increased to thirty-one by Julius Cæsar. Winta Monath was the name by which it was known to the Saxons, until their conversion to Christianity, when they gave to it the name of Helig, or Holy Month, with reference to the celebration of the Nativity on the twenty-fifth. They also termed it Guil Erra, which means the former or first guil. The feast of Thor, which was celebrated at the winter solstice, was called guil from "iol" or "ol," which signifies ale, and is now corrupted into yule. The festival in former times appears to have

been continued through part of the next month.

Of the weather to be expected at this season of the year we are told as follows :

Bright Christmas, light wheatsheaf ;
Dark Christmas, heavy wheatsheaf.

"A green Christmas makes a fat churchyard," though, as a Cumberland newspaper sagely observed, "Even a *green* Christmas is not half so *black* as it is painted." We are getting used nowadays to green Christmases, and the mortality certainly does not appear to be singularly heavy.

I know nothing about Saint Barbara beyond the fact that she is well known and properly revered in Russia. Her day is the fourth of December, and the Russians have a saying that "Saint Barbara makes bridges of ice."

One of the most curious customs anciently observed in connection with the anniversary of a saint's death was that which on Saint Nicholas's Day, December the sixth, was formerly observed at Salisbury Cathedral, or Old Sarum, as it is called. This consisted of the choice of a boy Bishop from among the choristers, whose term of office lasted from this date until Innocents' Day, twenty-two days later. The boy was invested with the full authority of a genuine prelate, dressed in episcopal robes and mitre, and carried also the pastoral crozier. His fellow choristers, for the time named, acted as prebendaries, and were obliged to render due homage and respect as such. The evening before Innocents' Day there was a special service, attended by the juvenile prelate and his equally juvenile clergy in solemn procession, chanting hymns as they marched solemnly up the aisle to the choir. There the little Bishop took his seat upon the episcopal throne, surrounded by his youthful clergy, when a service was rendered in remembrance of the massacre, by Herod, of "all the male children that were in Bethlehem." Multitudes used to assemble to witness the spectacle, and so great was the crush, that special enactments were passed to prevent any undue crowding of the little fellows. If the boy elected as prelate died during his term of office, his funeral was conducted with all the pomp and ceremonial observed on the demise of a veritable prelate, and he was buried in his full canonicals. There is still to be seen a monument to one who actually died during his brief period of official life, carved in stone, with mitre on his head, and crozier in his hand. while two angels

support a canopy over his head. The custom was suppressed in England in July, 1542, but lingered for some time after.

The statutes of Old Saint Paul's School (1518) direct that every Childermas, the pupils shall go to Saint Paul's to hear the Childe Bishop's sermons. They add that after he be at high mass, each of them shall offer a penny to the Childe Bishop.

Formerly the distribution of holiday gifts, in Germany, took place on Saint Nicholas' Eve, but in order to invest the festival of Christmas with additional importance in the eyes of children, it was transferred to the Christmas tree.

Saint Nicholas, whose day is thus celebrated, was created Archbishop of Myra in Greece, in the year 342 A.D., and was marked by the benevolence of his disposition, which took the form of protecting orphans and seamen in distress, on which account churches near the sea are, in many instances, dedicated to him. The saint was also the patron of scholars, clerks, and robbers. The former is due probably to the fact that he was an educated man, but why the latter is a mystery which has never yet been explained satisfactorily. Saint Nicholas is credited with having proved a father to dowerless maidens, to whom he flung purses of gold through their chamber windows!

The eighth of December was once observed with some ceremony by the Catholic Church, as the date of the conception of the blessed Virgin Mary.

The fourteen days from the eleventh to the twenty-fifth of December used to be called *Halcyon Days*, and were supposed to be, from their calm and tranquil character, an exception to the season. The thirteenth is Saint Lucy's or Saint Lucia's Day, and commemorates a young lady saint, who obtained a high character for a devout and charitable life. She died in the year 304, and has always since been held in great veneration. Her name appears in the English and Romish calendars. The fifteenth is the first of the last three *Ember Days* of the year. The sixteenth, as those conversant with the calendar will no doubt be aware, is marked "O! Sapientia." As far as I have been able to gather, this refers to an anthem once sung in the English and Romish Churches on this day. December twenty-first brings us to the festival of Saint Thomas. This is a holy day in the calendars of both English and Romish Churches, and was formerly observed with due ceremonies. On this day it was

customary in the distant past for women to go about begging money, and in return to present the donors with sprigs of palm and bunches of primroses. This custom was termed "going a goading." In Warwickshire, the poor people were in the habit of begging corn from the farmers, which was termed "going a corning." Both customs are now quite obsolete. There is an old weather saying, which tells us that a frost beginning on Saint Thomas's Day will last for three months. According to Herriek's "*Hesperides*," the Christmas festivities began with doling on Saint Thomas's Day, when the villagers went round for doles or contributions for the Yule feast, these being thrown into a common fund, and at the end of the day were apportioned or doled out by some responsible person, usually the clergyman.

I now come to the feast of the year, and one which in some form is celebrated all over the world. I allude to Christmas, December twenty-fifth.

The word Christmas is taken from Christ and the Saxon word *Mæsse*, signifying a mass and a feast. Thus we get the word Christmas, or Christ's mass, or the feast of Christ. The learned lexicographer, Dr. Johnson, says, the word is derived from Christ and Mass, "the day on which the nativity of our Blessed Saviour is celebrated by the particular service of the Church."

The learned have long been at variance as to the precise day on which Christ was born, but that which has most generally been received as the correct one is the twenty-fifth of December. Christmas has always been a joyful and festive season, and the great time for all manner of games and fun, while amongst our ancestors every day until Twelfth Night, and often till Candlemas, was more or less a repetition of the same enjoyments.

The first traces on record of the observance of the festival at Christmas are to be found about the second century, in the time of the Emperor Commodus, the man who desired to be called Hercules, fought with the Roman gladiators, and boasted of his dexterity in killing wild beasts in the amphitheatres. He was also in the habit of sprinkling so much gold dust on his hair and appearing bareheaded in the sunshine, that his head glittered as if surrounded with sunbeams, and gave him the appearance of a god. He was poisoned in the thirty-first year of his age by Martia, whose death he had prepared, and as the poison did not operate quickly he was strangled by

a wrestler. Some writers, however, place the institution of the rites of Christmas prior to the reign of Commodus, and at the time of Antoninus, surnamed Pius. He it was who said with Scipio, "I prefer the life and preservation of a citizen to the death of one hundred enemies." In his reign it is said that Telesphorus (A.D. 137) ordered divine service to be celebrated and an angelic hymn to be sung on Christmas Eve.

Diocletianus, the ferocious Roman Emperor, who rose from the position of a common soldier to the supreme sovereignty of the Roman Empire, leaves us proof sufficient of the existence of the festival during his time, for at Nicomedia, when he was holding his Court, he discovered a multitude of people gathered together in one of the churches celebrating Christ's nativity, and thereupon ordered that all the doors should be shut and the church set fire to. Thus the church and the people were reduced to ashes. This was the commencement of what was called the "tenth persecution," which lasted ten years. By that one act alone six hundred persons perished.

The first Christians solemnised Christmas on the first day of January; but on the day set apart to the Feast of the Tabernacles they decorated their churches and houses with green boughs, as Jennings, in his "*Jewish Antiquities*," affirms, as a memorial that Christ was actually born at that time. This custom of decoration still prevails.

Father Chrysostom observes that "it was but of a little while that Christmas (twenty-fifth of December) had been celebrated at Antioch, as a distinct feast from the Epiphany (sixth of January), and that the use thereof came from the West." The Armenians made but one feast of the two as late as the twelfth century, and the Greeks still keep Epiphany, with the birth of Christ, on Christmas Day. John, Archbishop of Nice, in an epistle on the subject, relates that, at the instance of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Pope Julius procured a strict enquiry to be made into the day of our Saviour's birth, which being found to be on the twenty-fifth of December, the feast began then to be celebrated on that day. It is also reckoned that Christ's baptism by John took place on the sixth of January, when he was about thirty years of age.

The English have always observed the time with great rejoicings, and in the early

periods of Christianity in this country, when the devotions of the morning were over and the day declining, it was usual to light candles of large size and to bring to the fire the Yule log, or Christmas block.

In the Tudor period the King, Nobles, Courtiers, everyone down even to the meanest beggar in the streets, went a-mumming in masks, representing the heads of goats, of stags, or of bulls, and sometimes dressed in skins after the manner of savages, and bearing no little resemblance to wild animals. In every parish a man was chosen, called the "Lord of Misrule," and he used to collect a large band of idle fellows who, dressed in various bright colours and covered with ribbons, went through the streets and lanes, beating drums and blowing trumpets. The Grand Captain of Mischief acted as Master of Revels at the houses of the great in the land, and was crowned with much solemnity. He commonly entered upon his duties by explaining to the company that he absolved them from all their wisdom while the reign of fun and folly should last.

Hollingshead mentions a gentleman named George Ferrara, "a lawyer, a poet, and an historian," who supplied the office well in the fifth year of Edward the Sixth, and who was rewarded by the young King with princely liberality. The festive season was observed by most lavish expenditure at the Inns of Court, where the Lord of Misrule was often termed the Christmas Prince or the King of Christmas.

A continual round of applause runs its course through the twelve days forming the feast of Yule, though formerly, as before mentioned, the twelve days were prolonged to Candlemas Day, when, and not till then, the last remnants of Christmastide were pulled down and put away for another year.

Some idea of the ceremony with which the Yule log was brought in may be gathered from Herrick's verses :

Come, bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing ;
While my good dame, she,
Bids you all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.
With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For the good success in his spending,
On your psalteries play
That sweet luck may
Come, while the log is a-tending.
Drink now the strong beer,
Cut the white loaf here,
The while the meat is a-shedding ;
To the rare mince pie,
And the plums stand by,
To fill the paste that's a-kneading.

The Ancient Britons, Anglo-Saxons, Romans, Scandinavians, Greeks, and Egyptians all held a great feast at Christmas time, which was in no small degree similar to the Christmas feast of the present day. The Yule log was burnt, the mistletoe was cut down by the Druids with great solemnity, while feasting and rejoicing went on throughout the land. The dishes most in vogue at the Christmastide of our remote ancestors were, for the breakfast and supper of Christmas Eve, the noted boar's head, with an apple or orange in his mouth, and the remainder garnished most profusely with rosemary. Then there were the plum porridge or plum puddings, and the mince pies, originally constructed in a long shape to represent the manger which served for a cradle at Bethlehem. The breakfasts of the time were of a substantial kind, and brawn, mustard, and malmsey figured on the well-filled board, while those partaking of the abundance before them were entertained the while with music.

Among the sports, which were formerly common at this joyous season, were those of gaming, music, juggling, dancing, hunting owls and squirrels, together with fool-plomb, hot cockles, jack puddings, scrambling for nuts, apples, and other things ; trying the chance at a stick moving on a pivot with an apple attached to one end and a candle at the other, and he who unfortunately missed his bite from the apple, burnt his nose at the candle. There were forfeits, interludes, blind-man's-buff, and mock plays. The strong beer was broached, and the black-jack went plentifully about with toast, sugar, nutmeg, and good Cheshire cheese. The hacken (great sausage) must be boiled by daybreak, or else two young men must take the cook by the arms and run her round the market-place till she was ashamed of her laziness.

The small farmers provided "good drink, a blazing fire in the hall, brawn, pudding and souse, and mustard with all, beef, mutton, and pork, shred or minced pies of the best pig, veal, goose, capon, and turkey, cheese, apples, and nuts, with jolie carols."

The English gentleman had all his tenants and neighbours to enter his hall by daybreak ; all ate heartily, and were welcome.

The Romans held their Saturnalia at this time of the year, in commemoration of the peaceful and happy period in which Saturn flourished, which the poets have celebrated as the Golden Age. The lowest slaves had a temporary equality with their masters,

who patiently bore every freedom of remark from their menials, and even submitted to the keenest sarcasms. One day only was at first devoted to the celebration of the festival, but Augustus gratified the people with two additional days of sport and festivity. The outcropping of the freedom and license of the Saturnalia are visible in many forms in Christmas observances. The feast of Asses in France and England were more of these December liberties born of the same stock. In those grotesque Saturnalia everything serious was burlesqued; inferiors personated their superiors, and sedate men became frolicsome. In a modified degree the idea has come down throughout Protestant England and Puritanical Scotland to modern days.

We have records from the date of the Norman Conquest, telling of the great feasting of our former sovereigns and of their Courts on each successive Christmas. In the Norman times the Kings held their feasts at Gloucester, York, or Windsor, a rule hardly ever deviated from.

William the First chose Christmas Day for his Coronation. Richard Cœur de Lion once kept his feast with all his Court at Sicily. Edward the First is mentioned in history as being at Bristol, among other places, on a Christmas Day. In 1343 Edward the Third renewed the famous tradition of the Round Table, and instituted the Order of the Garter with great magnificence and unlimited feasting at Christmas. Henry the Fifth, during the lengthy siege of Rouen, would not let the day pass unheeded; but ceased hostilities, and made it known by heralds that all of the enemy's force, who would come to the English camp, should be well fed at his expense. And again, at the siege of Orleans, a cessation of hostilities was requested that the day might be devoted to merriment and pleasure. A curious edict, dated 1461, forbade all dicing or playing at cards, except at Christmas, among the people.

On Saint Stephen's Day, the twenty-sixth of December, in Ireland, the wren was formerly hunted by men and boys, they singing the while this verse:

The wren, the wren,
The king of all birds,
On Saint Stephen's Day
Was caught in the furze.
Though he is small
His family's great,
Out with your money,
And give us a trate.

I have not been able to trace the origin

of this custom, so far as Ireland is concerned, beyond the fact that it is connected with fairy legends somewhat similar to that of the Isle of Man, where wrens are regularly hunted on Saint Stephen's Day. There is a tradition that when Saint Stephen was lying in prison, under sentence of death, he nearly escaped from his keepers, and would have entirely succeeded but that a wren flew on the face of one of them and woke him.

On this day it was also formerly the cruel custom to sweat and bleed horses by galloping and rushing them over hedges and ditches and frequently bleeding them, in order to prevent their having any disorders during the ensuing year. Bishop Kennett says, that in the West of England, when the women put their bread into the oven they make use of this prayer:

Pray God and Saint Stephen
Send a just batch and an oven.

Throughout Cape Finisterre, the peasants make a point of never eating cabbage on St. Stephen's Day, because, as they allege, the martyr concealed himself from his persecutors in a field of cabbages.

The next holiday is a more modern one, Boxing Day, held on the first week day after Christmas Day. The origin of "boxing" is derived from the custom that formerly prevailed of carrying from door to door a box for the purpose of collecting small presents; and a poet of the period in which the custom was in vogue (Gay), thus refers to it:

When time comes round, a Christmas Box they bear,
And one day makes them rich for all the year.

The practice of thus collecting alms is supposed to have arisen from a custom of sailors who left a box for each ship in charge of the priests, who offered up prayers for the safety of the said vessels. These boxes contained money or articles of value, and were opened at Christmas—thus the phrase "Box money, or money to supply the priest's box." The poorer people begged of their richer neighbours, to be enabled to contribute their share of box money. Thus the formula of boxing still continues, and in many places we have the Christmas waits and carol singers, the dustmen and the public workers, regularly turning up to seek their box-money. In the British Museum are specimens of "Thrift Boxes," small and wide bottles with imitation stoppers, from three to four inches in height, made of thin clay, the upper part covered with green glaze. On

one side is a slit for the introduction of money, of which they were intended as the depositories; and as the small presents were collected at Christmas in these money-pots, they came to be called "Christmas Boxes," and thus gave the name to the present itself. My researches, however, into the origin of the Christmas Box lead me to the conclusion that it originally came from Germany, along with the Christmas Tree and many another pleasant custom.

Innocents' Day, or Childermass (December the twenty-eighth), is an ancient festival of the Roman Catholic Church, celebrated with great pomp in memory of the slaughter of the Innocents'. In the Greek Church it is observed one day later. Wither says, "In honour of the Almighty's providence, the Church celebrated this day, to put us in mind also how vainly the devil and his members rage against God's decree, and that the cruel slaughter of those poor infants may never be forgotten; which, in a large sense, may be called a martyrdom; as in the generality of the cause (being for Christ), and in the passion of the body, though not in the intention of the mind." It was considered very unlucky to marry or begin any work on this day.

THACKERAY'S BRIGHTON.

THE popular impression that George the Fourth was the founder of Brighton is not strictly correct; for before the days of the gay Prince the town had acquired a considerable reputation as a health resort, with its recognised season, its chalybeate springs, its bathing-machines, and its fashionable physicians. But, though not the founder, Prince George may fairly be regarded as the discoverer of Brighton; for there can be no doubt that the extraordinary rapidity with which the little Sussex bathing resort blossomed forth into the queen of watering-places, was due much more to the presence of Royalty than to the skill of the local physicians; more to the artificial beauties of the Pavilion than to the natural attractions of the barren cliff. Hence George the Fourth may claim to be the patron, if not the patron saint, of Brighton.

Specially associated, then, as the town is with George the Fourth, it is only natural that it should be a conspicuous feature in the dramas of the great novelist who has made a special study of the Georgian

period; and it is no doubt to this association, combined with a personal familiarity with, and affection for, the place, that we owe the various little Brighton scenes which are to be found in the works of Thackeray.

It is impossible for any reader of Thackeray to spend many hours in Brighton without having some passage from his writings recalled to mind. At every turn we recognise some scene which his graphic pen has depicted, or some locality haunted by his characters. Thackeray himself speaks of George the Fourth as the inventor of Brighton; but we need not be too captious about this phrase. We may take it in its original sense; or we may look upon the Prince as the second founder of the town; but, at any rate, let us give the Prince his due, and feel grateful to him, as Thackeray says we ought to feel, "for inventing Brighton."

It has been alleged against Brighton that it is too modern a town to have any antiquarian objects of interest. But, at any rate, it may claim exemption from the imputation of being "nouveau riche;" for it essentially belongs to a period fast receding into the distant past; and something of the pathetic interest belonging to more ancient towns is suggested by the sight of certain localities—once the very centre of fashionable life, but now almost deserted, or haunted only by the ghosts of by-gone visitors such as the Countess of Kew, Colonel Newcome, and Miss Crawley. The Pavilion might this year have celebrated its centenary; the Chain Pier has seen two generations pass away; and the Ship Inn traces its existence back into the distance of the seventeenth century. Even since the publication of Thackeray's "Vanity Fair"—the early numbers of which were written at the Ship—a generation has passed away; and during this time the population has doubled, new districts have sprung up, and new localities have become centres of fashion. But amid the changes which lapse of time and the fickleness of fashion have brought about, the characteristic features of the place remain unchanged, and the visitor of to-day cannot fail to be struck by the vivid touches of such a description as the following:

"That beautiful prospect of bow windows on one side and the blue sea on the other which Brighton affords to the traveller! Sometimes it is towards the ocean—smiling

with countless dimples, speckled with white sails, with a hundred bathing-machines kissing the skirt of his blue garment—that the Londoner looks enraptured; sometimes, on the contrary, a lover of human nature rather than of prospects of any kind, it is towards the bow windows that he turns, and that swarm of human life that they exhibit. From one issue the notes of a piano, which a young lady in ringlets practises six hours daily, to the delight of the fellow-lodgers; at another, lovely Polly, the nursemaid, may be seen dandling Master Omnium in her arms, whilst Jacob, his papa, is beheld eating prawns and devouring the ‘Times’ for breakfast at the window below. Yonder are the Misses Leery, who are looking out for the young officers of the Heavies, who are pretty sure to be pacing the cliff; or again, it is a City man, with a nautical turn, and a telescope the size of a six-pounder, who has his instrument pointed seawards, so as to command every pleasure-boat, herring-boat, or bathing-machine that comes to, or quits, the shore. But have we any leisure for a description of Brighton?—for Brighton, a clean Naples with genteel lazzaroni; for Brighton, that always looks brisk, gay, and gaudy, like a harlequin’s jacket; for Brighton, which used to be seven hours distant from London at the time of our story; which is now only a hundred minutes off; and which may approach who knows how much nearer, unless Joinville comes and untimely bombards it.”

As we walk along the cliff between the “beautiful prospect of bow windows” (still conspicuous among the more imposing frontages of modern times) and the blue sea (still “smiling with countless dimples, and speckled with white sails”), there rise irresistibly before the mind’s eye some of the old-world characters whom Thackeray has associated with the brisk, gay, gaudy scene before us. Lounging along the cliff, we may see, in imagination, three young men of the period of good King George—a large young dandy, six feet high; a good-looking young officer, with a jaunty air and enormous black whiskers; and a fat, flabby gentleman, more military in attire than his military companions, with clanking boots pure, and frock-coat ornamented with frogs, knobs, black buttons, and meandering embroidery. “What shall we do, boys, till the ladies return?” asks the most splendid of these bucks. Then follows a discussion of the respective attractions of

a game at billiards, the inspection of some new horses that Snaffles has just bought at Lewes fair, or the consumption of ices at Dutton’s; till at length the last resource of watering-place loungers occurs to them, and off they march to the coach-office to see what new arrivals the “Lightning” coach may bring. Perhaps no introduction is necessary; but, for form’s sake, let us present the trio by name: Captain Rawdon Crawley, guardsman and gambler, but chiefly notable as the husband of Mrs. Becky Crawley, née Sharp; Captain George Osborne, who is spending his brief honeymoon at the Ship with the gentle Amelia; and Joseph Sedley, who, when not too much occupied with the care of his liver, acts as collector at Boggley Wollab. From the coach steps down another familiar figure—Major Dobbin, bringing the thrilling news that the troops are under marching orders for Belgium—and Waterloo.

Within a few stones’ throw of the Ship were the lodgings of the wealthy Miss Crawley. Here, under the careful attentions of the avaricious, managing, domineering Mrs. Bute, the dear invalid was brought almost to death’s door—so low, in fact, that, as her maid pathetically expressed it, “She have no spirit left in her; she haven’t called me a fool these three weeks.” Here the old lady is visited by her odious, hypocritical, successful nephew, Mr. Pitt Crawley; by the gentle Lady Jane Sheepshanks; and by that formidable philanthropist, the Countess of Southdown, who visits the invalid, armed with tracts, and benevolently determined to provide for her physical and spiritual welfare, by removing her from the care of that dangerous and ignorant practitioner, Mr. Creamer, and by bringing her under the pious ministrations of that awakening man, the Rev. Bartholomew Irons. Here, too, we are introduced to that interesting youth, Jim Crawley, the loutish Oxford undergraduate, who, as his father boasted, had had the advantages of a University education, and had been plucked only twice. Sent as ambassador to keep on good terms with his aunt and her seventy thousand pounds, this young gentleman arrives by coach, with his favourite bull-dog, Towzer, in company with the Tutbury Pet, who is travelling to Brighton to engage in the prize-ring with the Rottingdean Fibber.

Another of the localities haunted by Thackeray’s characters—the Chain Pier—

has suffered sad reverses from the fickleness of fashion. Formerly a wonder of engineering skill—Faraday, by the way, mentions it as the one thing worth seeing in Brighton—it now has its rivals at every watering-place of note, and is completely overshadowed by its more fashionable neighbour, the West Pier. But one almost fancies one sees the gay scene, and feels the fresh breezes as one reads Thackeray's vivid description :

"The Chain Pier, as everyone knows, runs intrepidly into the sea, which sometimes, in fine weather, bathes its feet with laughing wavelets, and anon, on stormy days, dashes over its sides with roaring foam. Here, for the sum of twopence, you can go out to sea and pace this vast deck without need of a steward with a basin. You can watch the sun setting in splendour over Worthing, or illuminating with its rising the ups and downs of Rottingdean. You see the citizen with his family inveigled into the shallops of the mercenary native mariner, and fancy that the motion cannot be pleasant ; and how the hirer of the boat, "*otium et oppidi laudans rura sui*," haply sighs for ease, and prefers Richmond or Hampstead. You behold a hundred bathing-machines put to sea. Along the rippled sands—stay, are they rippled sands or shingly beach !—the prawn-boy seeks the delicious material of your breakfast. Breakfast—meal in London almost unknown, greedily devoured in Brighton ! In yon vessels now nearing the shore, the sleepless mariner has ventured forth to seize the delicate whiting, the greedy and foolish mackerel, and the homely sole. Hark to the twanging horn ! It is the early coach going out to London. Your eye follows it, and rests on the pinnales built by the beloved George. See the worn-out London "*roué*" pacing the pier, inhaling the sea-air, and casting furtive glances under the bonnets of the pretty girls who trot here before lessons ! Mark the bilious lawyer, escaped for the day from Pump Court, and sniffing the fresh breezes before he goes back to breakfast, and the bag full of briefs at the Albion ! See that pretty string of prattling school-girls, from the chubby-cheeked, flaxen-headed, little maiden just toddling by the side of the second teacher, to the arch damsel of fifteen, giggling and conscious of her beauty, whom Miss Griffin, the stern head-governess, awfully reproves ! See Tompkins, with a telescope and marine jacket ; young Nathan and young Abrams, already

bedizened in jewellery, and rivalling the sun in oriental splendor ; yonder poor invalid crawling along in her chair ; yonder jolly fat lady examining the Brighton pebbles (I actually once saw a lady buy one), and her children wondering at the sticking-plaster portraits with gold hair, and gold stocks, and prodigious high-heeled boots, miracles of art and cheap at seven and sixpence."

This is the scene of Philip Firmin's rencontre with his fiancée Agnes, and her new lover. Proceeding down "the steps, under which the waves shimmer greenly, and into quite a quiet corner just over the water, whence you may command a most beautiful view of the sea, the shore, the Marine Parade, and the Albion Hotel," he finds his faithless Agnes and her favoured suitor deeply engaged in conversation, the subject of which was nothing less romantic than pug-dogs.

Even Brighton is not always bright and gay, and those who have encountered a "brave north-easter" there, will appreciate Thackeray's allusion to "that fine, cutting, east wind, which blows so liberally along the Brighton cliffs."

Was it the influence of this cutting east wind, or the boredom of some inconvenient acquaintance, that inspired Thackeray to speak so feelingly of the one fault in Brighton ? "It is too near London . . . Was ever such a tohu-bohu of people as assembles there ? You can't be tranquil if you will. Organs pipe and scream without cease at your windows. Your name is put down in the papers when you arrive ; and everybody meets everybody ever so many times a day." The grumble about "inconvenient acquaintance" and the "insidious London fog," doubtless, merely expresses some momentary irritation ; for Thackeray's recently-published letters show how strong his liking for Brighton really was.

For fashionable personages, of course, the decrees of Society determine the proper time for visiting Brighton ; and perhaps Society has not selected a bad time. But persons who, from the humbleness of their station, or from the peculiar independence of their characters, can take their pleasure when it pleases them, will find that Brighton has some special attractions at a less popular time. Such, at any rate, was the opinion of the haughty old Dowager Countess of Kew, who used to set conventions at defiance, and remove thither when the London season was at its height. on the ground

that in the spring "the crowd of bourgeois has not invaded Brighton; the drive is not blocked up by flies; and you can take the air in your chair upon the Chain Pier, without being stifled by the cigars of odious shop boys from London." Taking the air on the Chain Pier seems rather a tame amusement for the scheming old Dowager; but then she had the constant occupation of tyrannizing over her family and listening to the scandal which her medical attendant supplied in proper doses for her entertainment.

To the modern visitor the Steyne has a somewhat faded appearance—solid and respectable rather than gay and fashionable; but in the early days of Brighton's prosperity it was the very centre of fashionable life. Here might be seen, on the promenade, Lord Chancellor Thurlow, Sir Philip Francis, Foote the actor, Philip Egalité, the Duke of Clarence, and the Prince himself, with all the other celebrities of the period who flocked down to Brighton.

Here—among the "mansions with bow windows in front, bulging out with gentle prominences and ornamented with neat verandahs, from which you can behold the tide of humankind as it flows up and down the Steyne, and that blue ocean over which Britain is said to rule, stretching brightly away Eastward and Westward"—honest Miss Honeyman lived and prospered, to the envy and annoyance of her neighbours—Mrs. Bugsby, whose visitors but too frequently departed after the very first night; and Mrs. Cribb, who "still went cutting pounds and pounds of meat off the lodgers' joints"; and Mr. Gawler, with his fly-blown card constantly in his window. Here might be seen the arrival of Lady Anne Newcome, with her two carriages, two maids, three children, and "man 'bout a livery"; and here, on another occasion, arrives the brave old Colonel, when he rushes down to Brighton to make the acquaintance of the good lady who had won his gratitude by her kindness to Clive.

But we have given reminiscences enough. When absent from Brighton it is pleasant to recall the lively scenes as they are presented in Thackeray's pages; and when these happy haunts are actually present before our eyes, it is inevitable that imagination should wander back and memory recall the old-world characters with which the great novelist has peopled them.

A WIFE, AND A FRIEND.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS

CHAPTER I.

Dear is the welcome guest to the Frisian wife when the vessel strands.

The ship is come, and her husband to his home, her own provider.

And she welcomes him in, washes his weedy garment, and clothes him anew:

It is pleasant on shore to him whom his love awaits.
The Song of Beowulf.

MAX SIMMOND had not come so far, nor been absent from home so long, as Beowulf's seafarer. He had only been spending a long November day toiling round his farm in the mud, but, as he stood on the wooden bridge over the swift, rain-swollen river, he was filled with just the same spirit of home-worship. Always, at the end of every day's work, when he saw that light, there came over him a deep feeling of gladness and reverence. He did not quite understand it, but he enjoyed it. A vague memory rose of the tones of the organ as it had sounded in the little sunlit church when Muriel and he were married. It was as if he had heard Muriel singing through the darkness; or, as if she had been able to stretch out her hand through the distance to touch him, as if in the brightness of that light he could see at once all the beauty, and hope, and content of his home.

Max Simmond was a big, fair-haired, quiet-voiced man, palpably a descendant of the old Saxon settlers, one of the steadfast, patient, home-loving race—only through time, and peace, and the soft climate of the inland valleys, the former fierceness had died out, and only the strength and sweetness remained, as it remained in the strange, wild air he was whistling, once, perhaps, a fierce war-song, now softened and mellowed till it seemed like a dream of battles and conquests long ago.

Max Simmond had not, perhaps, much individual character. He was neither brilliant nor heroic; his virtues were chiefly negative. He was brave, because it would not have occurred to him, under any circumstances, that there was anything to be afraid of; truthful, half from lack of imagination, half because he could not have realised any motive for lying. He would have been a good husband under any circumstances; but married to Muriel! why, he gave the whole strength of his nature to trying to satisfy her! And she was satisfied, and that, of course, proved

her goodness and sweetness, and made him the happiest man in the whole world.

He stopped again at his own gate to remove the cartridges from his gun. Muriel liked him to carry a gun when he went round the farm, not that there was much likelihood of his shooting anything, but she thought the gun looked well. It was a distinct mark of caste, and showed the land he farmed was his own.

Max entered the house by the back door, as he always did in muddy weather, and he took off his boots in the back entry, as became a docile and well-taught husband. He felt for his slippers in the accustomed place, but, not finding them there, hung up his wet ulster and went forward into the hall.

Through an open door Max could see his graceful, sweet-voiced wife, and he paused again, as he always did, to enjoy a moment of unexpressed thankfulness for her, a sort of mental "Grace before Muriel;" then he saw she was not alone. His own old friend, his one chosen chum, Philip May, who had been abroad nearly two years, was with her.

Max was dashing forward with eager words of welcome, when he remembered that Muriel would certainly be annoyed if he entered the room in his stockings, when she had a visitor. At that moment Muriel's voice, musical, and reproachful—tender almost—floated out to him.

"How can you blame me, Philip! You had left me in anger. You had said you would never see me again."

"But I took all that back; I begged your forgiveness for what I had said. In the letter I wrote you I implored you to forget it, and to remember only how I loved you, and that you had given me your promise."

"In the letter you wrote me?"

"Yes—the night I sailed. I said all that and more. Max was seeing me off; I gave the letter to him because it would reach you sooner so. Muriel, why do you look like that? Have you nothing to say? Muriel, is it possible that Max did not give you my letter?"

A moment before Max had been about to make his presence known; now he stood waiting, for it was Muriel's right to answer that question.

There was a moment's intense silence; then he heard his friend's voice again—in amazed, half-incredulous doubt:

"Max! dear old Max! Muriel, it can't be so. There's not a true man on the face

of the earth if Max is false. Muriel, you would defend him if it were possible. No, don't speak. I see. My one friend has betrayed me. I would have trusted Max with my life. I did trust him with more than my life, when I gave him that letter."

Max listened with a terrible eagerness he would not understand. Of course Muriel would speak now. She only waited to collect herself. In a moment she would speak, and would clear him from that horrible charge with indignant contempt. Nothing could be more certain than that.

But Philip spoke again—fiercely and passionately this time:

"I understand. It was not your fault. You thought I had given you up in my insane anger, and you let yourself be persuaded to marry him in despair. Muriel, my poor darling, we have been betrayed; but by Heaven, Max Simmond shall repent it. Liar! Thief! Muriel, you belong to me, and he has stolen you. I will wait till he comes home, and he shall answer for it."

Philip May broke into incoherent threats of vengeance, and Max listened and waited.

Surely, surely, Muriel would speak now, he knew she would. He held his breath and waited.

Yes—her dear, sweet voice sounded distinct and eager:

"Philip, dear friend, for my sake—yes, for my sake—meet him in peace; he is so good, so kind to me."

Max heard no more. He did not care for the answer. What did it matter? What did anything in the world matter after that? His friend might murder him as he had threatened, if he would. His wife had done worse.

He turned from the lighted hall, and, going out again, wandered aimlessly down the dark road, trying to understand what he had heard and seen.

He had heard his friend accuse him of a cruel treachery, and his wife had not denied the charge. She had actually confirmed it by her answer. He had seen her sweet face raised in tender pleading that he might be forgiven a fault, which she knew the whole forces of the universe could not have moved him to commit.

He knew what the discussion was about. Philip and Muriel had been friends before he had met her. He had often wondered, when first he had seen them together, if they cared for each other; but he had

never asked, because he was not given to asking questions, and, besides, he had told himself that, if Philip May ever wanted him to know anything, he told it freely. Then Philip had been obliged to go to Japan on sudden business, and Max had seen him on board the ship. At the last moment Philip had given him a letter for Muriel, and he had taken it to her the same evening. Muriel, with some pretty jest about even girls having business letters sometimes, which must be attended to, had read it in his presence, first asking his permission, like the gracious gentlewoman she was. Then she had thrown it on the fire, saying there was nothing in it. At that he had summoned all his courage, and begged her to tell him if there was anything between her and Philip, because he had loved her from the first moment he had seen her; but had kept silence because he did not want to disturb her or Philip in their happiness, and that he should love her till he died, because he could not help it, and would not if he could.

Then she had put her sweet white hands in his, and had told him that she loved only him, and he had asked her if she were sure, and she had laughed a little, and said, "Very sure—she never had loved, never could love, anyone but him;" and she had laid her dear, graceful head on his breast, and made him promise he would be very good to her, because she could not bear to be scolded. Afterwards he had found two or three glistening, wavy hairs on his coat, and had treasured them ever since, in memory of the first time her head had lain on his breast.

It had lain there so often since. She had spoken the like pleading words so often; not lately, but when first they were married, if things went wrong in the house, or if she had been a little impatient or petulant. Afterwards she had ceased to fear scolding, because everything she did satisfied him, everything she said delighted him.

Max found himself on the bridge again, looking at the far-off light. All the joyful content in the completeness of his life seemed so far away in the past that he could scarcely believe in it. The memory of the time, when but a little child, he had wept over the death of his mother, did not seem so lost in the past as the days when he believed in Muriel. He found himself almost in tears as he thought of his mother; but the loss of Muriel was as far off as the

memory of half-forgotten dreams. But Muriel was waiting for him, he could see her shadow cross and recross the light, yet she was as hopelessly lost to him as if she had lain beneath the rushing waters of the river below him.

He remembered, in one of those books his wife had been in the habit of reading to him, or making him read to her in the evenings, because she wanted to improve his mind, and to have her husband as well read as herself—he liked it best when she read, because then he could look at her and see all the strange lights on the waves of her hair, and watch her eyes brighten or her lips tremble in sympathy with the story; sometimes she would let the book fall on her knees and begin to talk about it, and her words were always so much wiser than the prose, so much more poetic than the poetry. Well, he remembered one poem about a sea-maiden, who had fallen in love with a youth who was swimming somewhere—he had forgotten the story—but the sea-maiden had flung her arms round the youth and had borne him in love and triumph to her cave, only to find him dead. Max remembered he had asked Muriel not to go on reading, because the idea was too horrible; and yet he had not half understood it then. He understood it now; he knew how it felt to think one's arms held all love and all happiness, and to find one's self only clasping a dead thing.

The light still shone out, bright and clear. The sight of his roof-tree in flames would have spoken less to him of ruin and desolation, for that light told him that he must go home and tell his wife what he had heard, and then their life would be ended. There could be no hope, no future after that.

CHAPTER II.

"MAX! Is that you, at last! Oh, my dear old boy, how late you are! And how wet! You bad boy, you had not your ulster. But I can't scold, I am so glad to see you; I have really been quite anxious."

Muriel held up her face for her usual kiss, and he kissed her, because—he said to himself—it was for the last time; but he knew in his heart that he could no more have refused than he could have struck her.

Then she told him that he would find dry clothes by the fire in his room, and he must be very quick, because dinner had

been waiting so long, and, besides, there was a pleasant surprise awaiting him.

Then Philip came into the hall. And here was a new trouble—for Philip believed him to be a false friend, a scheming lover, and must always believe so—for he would never defend himself at the cost of Muriel's shame. He felt as bitterly humiliated as if there had been cause for such a belief; he scarcely dared to hold out his hand; he saw all the colour leave Philip May's face in the effort of self-control; he saw the contempt in his eyes, and felt him shrink as their hands touched, and Max knew he had lost his friend for ever.

Somehow the evening passed. It bewildered Max that the other two bore it so well. How could Philip sit at table with such a one as he believed his host to be. "Philip—dear friend—for my sake, for my sake." Ah, yes! that made it easy, of course.

So Philip talked about Japan, where he had spent the last two years; about tea-growing and Japanese art. And Muriel listened, and laughed, and was interested; and all the while it seemed to Max as horrible as jests, and laughter, and happy, careless speech, in the presence of death.

At last the evening was over. Max went to the door with his friend, and then came back to the room.

Muriel was kneeling before the fire, holding her hands towards it; the red light shone through them, making the fingers half-transparent. She was singing softly as he entered.

Let him look, let him listen for one moment; let him see her sweet face, fair and untroubled, before he covered it with unutterable shame; let him hear that dear voice sing, only once more before he heard it sobbing in vain repentance.

She stopped singing.

"I am glad Philip is gone, Max, though he is your friend, and very entertaining. We are happiest by ourselves, are we not, darling? But you look so tired to-night. Are you ill? Have you taken cold?"

He had not known it would be so hard to speak. He seemed to have no words, no voice. She was beside him now, her soft hands in his, her head on his shoulder.

"Max, my dear old boy, what is wrong? Your hands are like ice; you must be ill; or are you annoyed about anything? Don't mind it, dear, whatever it is. It is not about Mr. May, is it? Max, you can't be — I mean you don't think anything foolish about him, do you?"

"I am not jealous, if that is what you were going to say. I could not think anything ill of Philip, and it would go near to break my heart if I fancied he thought ill of me."

Would that make her speak? Would she ask in astonishment what he meant, and tell him indignantly that he had misheard, misunderstood? Heaven grant she might! No, with her face turned from him, but her hands in his, she answered lightly that no one could possibly think ill of her dear, perfect boy.

So beautiful, so winning, so wonderfully sweet and lovable, so dear, so close to him, and yet, when he had spoken, heaven and hell would not be more apart than they would be.

She went on trying like a child to coax him into cheerfulness, telling him he had certainly taken cold; he must go to bed, and she would bring him some hot wine, and he might be a little ill for a day or two if he liked; not enough to frighten her, only long enough to see what a nice nurse she would be.

Then at last he could bear it no longer. He drew back from her and tried to speak; he struggled with his voice; he caught his breath like a frightened child; he tried to look at her, but saw only her face as it had been raised in her false pleading to Philip May. Her voice was ringing in his ears, but he did not know if she said: "I love you, Max, only you;" or "Philip, dear friend, for my sake." Then her voice changed to a scream, and servants came into the room, and were helping him upstairs, while Muriel was crying and calling to someone to go for the doctor and run all the way, for her husband was very ill.

Yes, Max was seriously ill. The strongest man cannot stand motionless for an hour in the rain without suffering for it, even if he be in good spirits at the time. Though as Victor Hugo tells us, "The happy lover cannot feel the cold, the fire in him defies, dries up the rain," even the happy lover is apt to be the worse for the defying and drying process next day, and Max—his whole being deadened and unnerved—had been thoroughly drenched that night on the bridge; the result was a sharp attack of pleurisy, troublesome and tedious, but not dangerous.

Illness was as new a sensation as misery to Max Simmond; he had had no experience of either one or the other. To a man ill for the first time it is an awful experience to find that something stronger than

himself has seized his body and holds it helpless and passive; to find the limbs obedient yesterday to his will, to-day owning allegiance only to the malady, and, to a man unused to sorrow, the presence of a great grief is bewildering and confounding. It was terrible to Max to find sorrow his master, not to be resisted, or evaded, or overcome; no more to be thrown off than was the bodily illness; no more to be forgotten than the suffocating pain. For as the pain burned all day, was his last feeling as he slept, the first token of returning consciousness when he woke; so his new sorrow held on to his heart like a vampire, filled his mind until the last moment before sleep benumbed it, seized it the instant he woke, whispered to him while he dreamed, spoke to him even in the notes of the song Muriel sang half to herself as she went about the room, and stretched its dark bands between them when she stood and smiled at him, when she greeted him in the morning.

Muriel had kept her word. She had shown him how sweet and tender a nurse she could be, cheerful, untiring, and skilful. She made the whole room bright and cosy with her musical voice, her pretty ways, and sweet, cool hands.

Sometimes he lay awake for long hours, wondering what could have been her motive for slandering him. Not love of Philip May, for she had been engaged to him, according to what he had heard. They had quarrelled, and Philip had sent her an offer of reconciliation; but she had thrown Philip's letter contemptuously on the fire, saying there was nothing in it. She had chosen to marry him instead.

Why had she denied receiving the letter? Was it because she feared May's reproaches? She, who could not bear to be scolded! Then he remembered that Muriel had told him there had never been any engagement between her and Philip. Could it be that she feared lest Philip May, in his anger, might betray the fact that they had been engaged? Great Heaven! Could his wife have traduced him for so slight a cause as that? Why, he would not have believed it. Would not have listened to one word against her from the dearest friend he had on earth. No lips, no voice but her own could have raised an instant's doubt of her.

Then, when he turned and saw her sleeping in the chair beside him, her face grown pale and weary with watching, he hated himself for knowing what he knew, and not speaking. He called himself a

miserable coward, and said he was wronging his wife by this weak silence. If he had a charge against her, she had a right to know it. (There was some comfort in that thought. If he were wrong, too, that would put them more on an equality. She would not be so utterly ashamed if she had some counter-accusation against him.) Yes, he must speak, in justice to his wife; but not now, while he was so ill, he had no strength now, no self-command—he might break down, and sob like a child—and when he spoke, it must be as a man, as a judge.

Would she ask his forgiveness, he wondered. What must he say to that? It was not a matter for forgiveness; he was not angry with her. If he had found his beautiful wife had some hideous and loathsome disease, he would not have been angry, he would only have pitied her with all his soul, and given his life, were it possible, to make her whole, and that was how he felt now, but the evil was incurable. Not his life—nor hers—could wash out the stain of that lie. And she had been to him as his life, and honour; he had thought her as true as the Word of God.

Then her words "Philip, dear friend, for my sake," would ring in his ears, and for a moment he would see her face as he had seen it then; but if in his misery he let the slightest sound escape his lips, Muriel would wake and lay her cheek against his, and wonder when he was going to be well again, and say he was her dear, brave boy to lie there so quiet and patient, when he was in such pain, and he would answer her carelessly, and turn away, wishing wearily that his illness had been dangerous so that he might have died—and been spared the telling of what he knew.

So the time passed, and Max recovered slowly. At last he could come downstairs, and see his head workman, and listen to reports of what had taken place during his illness.

Philip May called and congratulated him on his recovery, coldly at first, and then almost as warmly and cordially as in the old days.

Max understood that he had been forgiven, for Muriel's sake, and the thought was unspeakably bitter.

After a few more days Max went about his work again, took up his life just where he had laid it down; worked, overlooked, bought and sold, and planned just as formerly, but found that his trouble had become a part of himself, no more to be cast off, than his identity.

Possibly to every third man one meets in the street, such sorrow is an old story; but it was utterly new and strange to Max Simmond.

Sometimes the thought would seize him that there might be some explanation of what he had heard; that Muriel, by some miracle, would sweep away all this misery, and stand before him his true wife once more, and he would kneel at her feet, and implore her pardon, and she would forgive him, for he had loved her so dearly, had suffered so bitterly, and then they would be as perfectly happy as before.

At such times he would hurry home with eager words on his lips, only to be struck dumb in her presence, and know that even that faint hope was so dear to him that he dare not risk the loss of it.

SOME LONDON RIOTS.

A GENERAL frost and discouragement came with the opening of the eighteenth century upon English life. People who had hitherto earned their bread easily, with something to spare, now found the task difficult, and those on the edge of destitution fell fairly over the border. London now began to feel the pinch of poverty, and to stir uneasily under the infliction. A growing discontent showed itself in many curious fashions.

There was nothing, for instance, in the personal character of Dr. Sacheverell, or in his sermons either, with their unpalatable doctrines of non-resistance, to excite popular enthusiasm. But the mob joined gaily enough in the demonstrations in his honour, and amused themselves in wrecking the meeting-houses of London, in making bonfires of their contents, and in happily unsuccessful chase of the meeting-house ministers to crown the burning piles. Then, getting a little beyond the noisy fanatics who had led them on, the thoughts of the populace turned with affection in the direction of the Bank of England. The treasures of the Bank have always strongly excited the popular imagination. To get inside the Bank and have the chance of pocketing as much gold as you can carry, is a prospect which might have attractions even for the soberest of mortals. It is true that the money would soon be gone; but there is always the chance of being one of the first at the strong box.

The directors of the Bank in their alarm applied to the Royal Council for troops to

protect their treasure. "Well," said the council in effect—it was in the reign of good Queen Anne—"if Her Majesty should send away her Guards, what might become of Her Majesty's royal self?"

The Queen, who was not wanting in courage, determined, however, to run the risk, and, after some delay caused by the officer in command demanding a written order under the hand of a Secretary of State, away went the Guards to fight their way into the City.

In Drury Lane—then one of the chief ways into the City from the west—one George Purchase, a broken trooper, held the pass with a handful of resolute men, fighting in sheer despair and because life was not worth having. But these were soon after overpowered, and the troops reached the Bank without further molestation. The drums of the trained bands were heard, beating to arms all over the City; but the mob made no further resistance, and dispersed more rapidly than it had assembled.

Forty years later than the Sacheverell riots, the sailors were the first to break the peace. There was great distress among the shipping trade, which then was concentrated about the Pool and the Tower. The sailors marched by the Strand in procession towards Parliament House. They were stopped by troops, and a great riot ensued. One of the sailors was afterwards executed at Tyburn, and the gallows was surrounded by a crowd of sympathising seamen.

In 1768, again there was great distress among the poor; provisions were dear and employment scarce, and cruel frosts aggravated the general suffering. The coal-heavers struck work and paraded the streets, the sailors from the docks joined in the demonstration. These last assembled in St. George's Fields and marched to St. James's Palace to interview the King. George, however, was politely "not at home."

On this occasion popular discontent found its watchword in "Wilkes and Liberty;" and, on the afternoon of the tenth of May, a great body of people assembled about the King's Bench Prison, where John Wilkes was then confined, designing to escort their hero to the House of Commons. A general riot ensued; the Act was read; the justices were pelted with stones; the troops fired on the crowd; numbers were shot—how many was never known. Next day the populace began to break open distillers'

shops and seize the liquors, and riot and drunkenness reigned supreme. The coal-heavers and the sailors fell out and fought out their quarrel in the streets. There was a general carmagnole of riot and debauchery, to be paid for afterwards in human lives. Many were hanged for rioting, others were sent to the plantations, where, perhaps, they fared better than at home.

But the great and matchless disturbances of the century—never destined, let us hope, to be matched in succeeding ages—were the Gordon riots. These had their origin in a regular and constitutional manner at a public meeting of the Protestant Association, held in the evening of the tenth of May, 1780, at the Coachmakers' Hall, Noble Street, Cheapside. The hall still exists, between the Bell Tavern and the Royal Mail, both of them, no doubt, once houses of call for thirsty coachmakers. Here it was that the president of the association, Lord George Gordon, proposed his famous resolution—that the whole body should meet in Saint George's Fields on the following Friday, at ten in the morning, to accompany their president to the House of Commons to deliver the Protestant Petition. A Relief Bill for the benefit of Roman Catholics—some of whose cruel disabilities it removed—had passed the House of Commons. This was bad enough; but it was proposed to extend the measure to Scotland, and that was enough to rouse the blood of the Gordons.

Fifty thousand people assembled in Saint George's Fields on that memorable Friday morning. They marched over London Bridge in tolerable order, six or eight in a rank, through Cornhill, Fleet Street, and the Strand. At the head of the procession rode the immense Petition, and banners, with anti-Catholic inscriptions, marked the several divisions of the crowd. At Charing Cross the procession was joined by an immense number on foot, on horseback, and in carriages; and Whitehall, and all the approaches to the Houses of Parliament were filled with a dense, excited crowd. A large Scottish element in the crowd made the episcopal bench the object of especial ill-treatment. The Archbishop of York was first attacked; the Bishop of Lichfield had his gown torn; the wheels were taken off the Bishop of Lincoln's carriage, and the Bishop himself ill-treated. The crowd filled the lobbies of the House, pressing against the folding doors in full sight of the Speaker in his spreading wig,

and the gilded bauble on its time-honoured resting-place. The Foot Guards were marched down to protect the Legislature, and the mob then retreated from Westminster, and after demolishing a few Roman Catholic chapels, dispersed peaceably to their homes. On the next day, Saturday, all was quiet, but on Sunday the mob assembled in Moorfields, and attacked a Roman Catholic chapel in Rope-maker's Alley close by; but were dispersed by the military. Next day more Roman Catholic chapels were destroyed, and the house of Sir George Saville, who had introduced the Relief Bill into the House of Commons, was attacked and gutted—this last, a phrase which perhaps dates from these times—for the fish-women of Billingsgate were especially active on the occasion, and emptied the house as cleanly as if it had been a herring. Still, there was no plundering so far; that is, everything was burnt and destroyed, and not purloined.

The day appointed for considering the great petition now arrived. All the available military forces were under arms; but the mob had grown more wild and tumultuous from its long immunity. When it was known that the petition had been refused consideration by the Commons, popular fury reached its height. The religious fanatics, who had set the ball in motion, were unable any longer to control it; they retired from the scene, and the spirits of mischief and anarchy came to the front. Mr. Justice Hyde attempted to disperse the mob with a party of Horse Guards, but the Justice's strategy was at fault, and the mob, in revenge, attacked his house in Lisle Street, and gutted it after the Billingsgate fashion. Then the mob marched down to Newgate, broke open the prison and burnt it with the sessions houses; the whole an awful scene, as Dickens describes it in "Barnaby Rudge." Dr. Samuel Johnson witnessed the affair, and wondered at the confidence and daring of the mob.

Simultaneously, as it seems, a clean sweep was made of the public office in Bow Street, and of Sir John Fielding's house adjoining, as well as of Justice Coxe's house in Great Queen Street. The two prisons at Clerkenwell were thrown open and the prisoners released. Fleet Prison was also taken possession of, but the inmates begged hard not to be turned out so late at night, and the mob obligingly consented to put off firing the prison till the following afternoon. But many private

houses were sacked, "and the elegant mansion of Lord Mansfield, in Bloomsbury Square, was burnt to ashes." In Lord Mansfield's cellars the rioters, many of them, found their Capua. They broached his lordship's casks, and emptied his lordship's choicest bins; men and women reeled about in the last stages of intoxication; the Guards came up, too late to prevent the mischief, and fired upon the rioters; six men were killed and one woman. But everywhere else the mob was in full possession of the town, and in honour of its success decreed a general illumination, an order which was almost universally complied with.

During the whole of the next day London was still in the hands of the rioters; business was everywhere suspended; contributions were levied; free quarters were exacted; and the growth of a certain organisation was apparent, under leaders not wanting in skill and resolution. The avowed intentions of the rioters were to burn the remaining prisons, and to demolish the Bank, the Temple, Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, the New River Head, the Royal Palaces, and Woolwich Arsenal. In the meantime everybody seemed to be in accord with the rioters. The doors and closed shutters were chalked with the words "No Popery." Blue flags and ribbons festooned the streets as if the whole city were "en fête," and nobody ventured abroad without first donning a blue cockade. But the actual results of the day's proceedings were disappointing to the rioters. Two attacks upon the Bank of England were repulsed, and the Navy Pay Office in the City was successfully defended against the mob.

Then the King's proclamation appeared authorising the military to act everywhere on their own account, and it became known that a formidable force would march into London and attack the rioters on the following day. Universal terror reigned; the citizens knew not whether most to dread the attack of the soldiers or of the mob. Already troops were drawn up about the Exchange and the Bank; everywhere was heard the roll of drums; artillery was massed in the Parks; the Guards bivouacked about the Royal Palaces. All shops were closed, and the approach of night was awaited in fearful suspense. It was expected that under cover of darkness the rioters, driven to bay, would lay the City in ashes.

Darkness came on and the flames arose!

The King's Bench and the Fleet were burning, the toll-gates on Blackfriars Bridge, and the new Bridewell. Flames burst from houses here and there; through the streets sounded the shouts of rioters, volleys of musketry, and the crackling of flames; while crowds rushed hither and thither bent on destruction; and all was uproar, confusion, and dismay. But the most terrible scene of the night was at Langdale's distillery in Holborn, which had been pillaged and fired by the mob. Liquor was handed round in pails, the drunk and the dying lay huddled together in the gutters; men and women encompassed in flames and drinking madly to the end. The insurrection seemed to drink itself to death, and perished in this mad orgie.

When the morning broke, it was upon a city as if taken by storm, with smoking ruins everywhere, and soldiers posted at every corner and occupying every point of vantage. There was fighting still, and here and there some enthusiast held out with desperate courage, such as the chimney-sweep, who, from the roof of a house, rained tiles upon the heads of the soldiers, till a bullet pierced his brain and he fell. There was gold in his pocket, and he might easily have escaped and have lived a happy sweep to the end; but no, he was filled with the Berserker frenzy, and preferred to die fighting.

On the following day business was again resumed, and the City assumed almost its usual aspect, except for the twenty thousand soldiers that were quartered in and around it. From first to last about five hundred of the rioters had been killed in the streets, and the number of the wounded who can tell? Trials followed, and some thirty prisoners were executed. But it is marvellous to relate, and very much to the credit of the English mob, that there is no record of anyone having met with a violent death at its hands. How different the event would have been in Paris under similar circumstances, the history of the subsequent Revolution may tell.

After the Gordon riots, subsequent risings seem but tame and ineffective. Such as the O. P. riots of 1809, all about the rate of admission to Covent Garden Theatre; a gentlemanly riot this, and hardly within our scope. Then there were the Burdett riots soon after, when Sir Francis Burdett, the popular favourite, was sent to the Tower, in charge of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and escorted by horse, foot, and artillery. The soldiers were

cheered by the populace, especially those who had just come home from the war in Spain. But as the military returned there was a disturbance, the troops fired, lives were lost, and many were wounded. We must not dwell upon election riots, for these were universal, but on the whole tolerably harmless. And although the exciting times of the Reform Bill of 1832 were attended with some disturbances in London, and a tumultuous gathering was dispersed by the Horse Guards in Piccadilly, yet public order was never seriously in danger.

We must pass to the revolutionary epoch of 1848 for the next great scare to which London was subjected. The hero of the occasion was Mr. Feargus O'Connor, and the occasion itself was the presentation of a monster petition to Parliament in favour of the five points of the Radical Charter. There was to be a monster meeting on Kennington Common, to carry the petition to Westminster, all this rather ominously following the precedents of the Gordon riots. But the Government of the day were fully prepared, troops were massed in London, and artfully posted by the old Duke of Wellington, so as to be out of sight, but ready to act. Then, in addition to the ordinary police, the streets were occupied by a great force amounting to upwards of two hundred thousand special constables. All the world was sworn in, and, among other notables, it is said that the future Emperor of the French assumed the policeman's bâton. In the City the Bank was fortified and artillery was at hand, and the old Duke was in the saddle all day long—his well-known form seeming as a tower of strength, although old and worn. The processionists were certainly overawed, and the whole affair assumed a mild and milk-and-water aspect.

It was not long after the Crimean War that some abortive Beer Bill brought the populace and police into collision in Hyde Park; and for long after, the right of meeting in Hyde Park, which is now virtually conceded to everybody, was a subject of contention. Most people recollect the disturbances of 1866, when the Park was closed to demonstrators, and when the Park railings were plucked up and a few heads broken on either side. But those things happened in prosperous times, when work was plentiful; and discontent was assuaged, and people bound over to keep the peace by good wages. The difficulties of the present situation are

due to conditions not nearly so hopeful. Special constables are useful, as showing the strength of the attachment of whole classes to public order. But special relief should not be forgotten in the midst of special distress; and it is surely the duty of a Government to adopt extraordinary measures for averting extraordinary distress, so as to place the honest working man out of the fear of being driven by want and distress to break up his home and throw his family on the parish and himself upon the streets.

POOR FOLK.

A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

By the Author of "*David Ward*," "*The Story of a Sonnet*," "*A Dreadful Mésalliance*," etc. etc.

CHAPTER IV.

MOTHER had told him to be good, he kept repeating to himself, as he sped towards the Docks, and he would be good, though in a different way from what she meant, because she did not know.

"To bear with Tom cannot be right, Tom who is such a tyrant and coward, that if I were King I should put him in prison for all his life," Gordon said to himself. "But to go away to the gold land where I can grow rich and make a happy home for her, and take her away from Tom and everyone who is cruel to her; that is sure to be right. And if I am not her own son—and who knows whether I am or not, since Tom is such a liar—I shall be better than her own son, for I shall love her and be good to her."

His encounter with his persecutor had changed his vacillation into resolution, his doubt into determination. To throw off Tom's yoke was right, so long as he remained faithful to Tom's mother.

And then to get away whither those outward-bound vessels went, to see the remote beautiful lands of which he had thought so often; that swelled his heart and set his pulses throbbing in spite of himself.

The early night was settling down darker, and the creeping fog was growing thicker in the streets. Pedestrians picked their way cautiously, or jostled each other blindly; cab-drivers sent a warning of their approach shrilly through the gloom, and the gas-lamps gave forth their light laboriously, as through sheets of horn.

For once the Docks were almost deserted, though certain vessels were due to sail in an hour; for what was the good of waiting

for the chance of seeing them off, when the keenest vision could not distinguish any object a yard away? Besides, the veriest tyro knew that no vessel would lift anchor in a fog.

Gordon needed to have all his wits about him to discover where the "White Swan" lay; her heavy sails furled dejectedly; her lights burning dimly; and her crew ill-temperedly waiting for orders.

The boy's mind was quite made up now: for weal or woe, for good or evil, he was going away, and it is scarcely to be wondered at that faith in the good in store for him preponderated far over dread of an unknown evil. Father had told him to be sure to see Australia, and he was going to see it; that was all.

Most of the passengers were already aboard. Intending emigrants generally came from country districts, and looked upon the ship by which they were to travel as their one friend and refuge in the great city; and, as a day here or there was of little moment to them, most of them had already sought their cabins and were doing their best to adapt themselves to their novel circumstances.

As Gordon paced the wharf he felt both fevered and shivering. Was everyone aboard, or asleep, or dead? He was debating the possibility of fitting across unnoticed in the mist, without daring to run the risk, when a cab laden with luggage drove up, and a burly man with a wife and several children alighted.

There was a little scrimmage before a porter could be discovered, and the smaller parcels were being apportioned among their owners for transfer on board, when Gordon approached and proffered his services.

Childish as he looked he belonged to the place and knew its ways, and so was much better than nobody. He was, therefore, deputed to find men who would take charge of the large packing-cases, and when he brought these he was paid for his trouble. But it was not money Gordon wanted, it was a commission, and as he was insistent and the gentleman indifferent, he secured a portmanteau and bonnet-box and went on board.

Half-an-hour later, when the owner went to count over his luggage, the portmanteau and bonnet-box were with the other things but the little fellow who had put them there was gone. Several people had seen him come aboard, and no doubt the mist was accountable that no one had seen him land again.

There were many anxious minds among the passengers that night, for the greater

portion of these were embarking on a new enterprise, fraught with danger and difficulty; a few were returning to the home they had made for themselves, and these were depressed too—indeed it may be safely asserted that the only heart beating with rapturous, triumphant anticipation of joys to come, was that of a little stowaway.

It was past midnight before the vessel weighed anchor; but ere that, Nature had been stronger than Gordon's excitement, and, in spite of the unaccustomed noises in his ears, in spite of the cramped position in which he lay hidden, he was fast asleep.

A sailor found him about dawn next morning, and reported his presence to the captain, and the captain ordered him a flogging first, because he had stolen a passage, and breakfast afterwards because he was hungry.

Stowaways in outward-bound ships are no great rarity, and, after a consciousness of their misdeeds has been impressed on them, work is generally found for them, with other accompaniments of doubtful quality.

It was Gordon's good fortune to impress the sailors. Indeed, his readiness and brightness made him a favourite with most people, and seamen are a not unkindly race, despite the cruel tales that reach us sometimes of life afloat. Nobody was disposed to be cruel to the little fellow, who was so ready to volunteer services of all kinds, from polishing the ship's brasses to mending the clothing of the cook and cabin-boy; and by-and-by certain privileges were allotted to him, notably free egress among the steerage passengers.

It was more of Gordon's rare luck that he found what sailors term his sea-legs the first day. It was quite odd to him how others could be pale and wretched with that life-giving smell in their nostrils, and the music of the waters in their ears. For his part, he was wild about the sea; possibly had drawn from some unknown forefather the passion that was in his blood. But for all that, when it was suggested to him that he should ship as cabin-boy on the return passage, and perhaps grow into an able seaman one day, he declined. He was bound for the land of gold and beauty, and meant to remain there.

He had made friends among the steerage passengers quickly. An emigrant woman, with many children, on their first voyage, helped him with a change of clothing; and a depressed man, who was returning to the colony after a visit to the old home, that had evidently proved disappointing,

grew very fond of talking to him. Not that this man—Taylor by name—was fond of talking; he held himself aloof a good deal from everyone, having no interest in the homely hugger-mugger of the family parties, nor in the vaulting ambition of the single men going out to seek for fortune. He had himself been pretty successful; but he was middle-aged, disillusioned, and not very happy; and somehow no one appealed to him half so much as the forlorn little child going so cheerfully towards the unknown.

Before he had encountered Gordon he had kept almost always by himself, pacing the deck or leaning on the ship's side to watch with sad eyes the long trail of foam in her wake; but when the bright-eyed little fellow appeared among the passengers, Taylor watched him instead. By-and-by he got to talking with him, and then he learned of the home he had abandoned, of mother, and of the brilliant future he anticipated.

"But do you think it was kind to your mother to leave her like that?" he asked in his serious voice.

"I mean to grow very rich," Gordon answered gravely, "and then I shall go back and buy her a house, or perhaps a shop. She would like a shop, I think, and I shall give her money, and nice dresses, and stay with her then."

"But how will you grow rich?"

"I shall go to the gold fields."

Taylor thought it his duty to disillusion Gordon. He knew the New Country well; had been in it for twenty years; had tried life under most of its conditions; and considered it no better country than the Old.

"But the animals have pockets, and the birds can talk, and jackasses have wings and fly about the trees, and there is gold in veins through the earth," Gordon said, with his penetrating, solemn gaze fixed on the stranger.

"Pockets? Yes, a couple of them; and talking birds, oh, plenty! But you don't think they talk English, surely? They articulate and they laugh, but that is all. As to the jackasses, they are birds, and their voice is very hideous—a kind of hoo-hoo-ha, like braying. Then, as regards the gold, certainly it is in the soil; but I believe the great finds have been made long ago. And better for the present generation that they have," he added after a pause, and more to himself than Gordon, "for gold-mining was just gambling on a gigantic scale, with the earth for a hazard table, and a fortune dependent on a throw

of the dice. Now most diggers earn a labourer's wage on an average, and no more, by means of labour no pleasanter than drain-making."

"But the weather is beautiful," Gordon persisted rather distressfully. "I have heard father say that at Christmas it is better than we have it in July."

"Yes, and in July it is colder than December in England."

"But you don't mean to say that it is no better than home?" He was staggered, but not convinced.

Taylor hesitated. He wanted to be impartial and correct. "There is good wage for good work, and there is a free field for a stout heart, whether of man, woman, or child. Oh, yes, there is much to be proud of in the colony."

"But can I do no better there, than if I had not left mother?" the boy asked with tears very near his eyes.

"What do you mean by better?" Taylor looked wistfully at the wise, old, earnest, child's face as he put the question. "Would you not call it better to live with me, say, and get a man's wage for helping on a big farm, and seeing after things?"

"But I have never seen a farm, I know nothing about it."

"You are sharp enough to learn. But you need not be in any hurry to make up your mind, as we are not half-way there yet."

"But do you mean that you offer to take me to your farm, if I like?" Gordon asked with business-like persistence.

"Yes, I mean it."

"Well, I shall tell you if I'll go when I have seen the country."

"He's the 'cutest little rascal," Taylor told himself delightedly. He had taken a fancy to the boy, and each new indication of Gordon's cleverness seemed a fresh testimony to his own powers of discernment.

Taylor's life had been an adventurous one, though, looking at him now, as he paced the main deck, or languidly watched the horizon, it would have been difficult to connect stirring incidents with any part of his career.

He was a Scotchman by birth, with aquiline features, thin hair streaked with grey, and that peculiar look in his light blue eyes, which denotes a gaze accustomed to far distances.

Twenty years before, when the gold fever was at its height, he had set sail from the Old Country, with youth's hope and ambition thrilling at his heart, and the intervening time had brought chances and changes such

as he had not anticipated, had disappointed many of his hopes, and disappointingly fulfilled others. At forty, David Taylor was middle-aged, disilluminated, and alone.

It was odd to himself, how he fancied the little stowaway, for his nature was not expansive, nor given to quick affections. Perhaps something in the child's forlornness vaguely reminded him of his own youth; or perhaps his ready adaptability to unforeseen circumstances charmed him with a promise of that quality of "grit," which was, in his eyes, of all gifts most commendable. "I should like to take him back to the farm," Taylor said to himself often. "It would seem like having brought a good thing back from home."

Gordon had grown fond of Taylor. The boy was naturally affectionate and grateful; but, for all that, he held his offer of a home and work in abeyance. He must land first, and see the New Country, before he could bind himself to anything.

The New Country proved just such a disappointment as Taylor had anticipated. From the hour when they sighted shore, the boy was wild to land, and almost before the gangway had been fastened to the other side he had scudded across it, and was lost to view in an instant.

"Without ever saying good-bye," the immigrant woman, who had been kind to him, said regretfully.

"Oh, he'll be back, never fear," Taylor answered, and sat down resignedly to wait.

"This cannot be Australia," Gordon told himself confusedly, as he ran from street to street, gazing about him with wide-open, observant eyes. "This place is just like home."

And it was very like home. There were the same large streets, the same ships in the docks; the same language spoken, by rougher throats, that was all.

Gordon was only a child in spite of his brave heart, and the disappointment was too much for him. After two miserable hours of investigation, he crept back to the "White Swan," that was composedly unloading her cargo, and hiding himself behind some tarpaulin that lay on the deck, wept as if his heart would break. He had expected so much, and the disappointment was so bitter.

"To have left home and mother for this," he said to himself heartbrokenly.

And then another sorrowful thought came to him: the friends who had been so kind to him, he had parted from them without a word of thanks or farewell.

He felt so miserable that, for a moment, he was tempted to consider the sailor's former offer, and ship as cabin-boy for the return journey. He had made a mistake in running away. At this distance of time young Tom's cruelties seemed less cruel; but going back again would at least show his consciousness of error.

He crept out from under the tarpaulin, his eyes swollen, his cheeks pale, and his heart as heavy as lead, and there, leaning lazily over the bulwark, watching the languid lapping of the wavelets against the ship's side, as if that were his most important business in life, was Taylor.

"So you're here," he said cheerfully. "Been sleeping?"

Gordon shook his head dolefully.

"Been on shore, then?"

"Yea."

"And you think this a great country, don't you?"

"It's so very like home," Gordon answered with a quaver in his voice.

"Yea, so it is; and you thought 'twas sure to be like that thing that follows the pantomime in the theatre: silver rivers and sands of gold, and palaces to make a background. Well, I can't say that that's Australia exactly; but there's good in the country for all that."

The boy answered with a shivering sigh.

"Now, farming in the Bush, where there's a good house, and plenty of cattle, and horses to ride, and where a little chap can earn ten shillings a week and not be overworked for that neither, isn't a very hard sort of life?"

Ten shillings a week! Gordon felt stunned. All that money for a little fellow like him, who knew nothing about farming and had nothing to recommend him but his readiness to learn. If he could earn so much, then, though in a different way from what he had thought, Australia must be a land of gold.

"Oh, I should like it," he said breathlessly, "but——"

"But what?"

"Could I see the gold fields first?" timidly.

Taylor was a little staggered.

"You are a cool chap, you are; but," after a pause, "I like people to speak their minds, and I don't know that I shouldn't be pleased to have a look at the gold fields myself, for old times' sake."

When a man has made a journey from Melbourne to the Scotch Grampians and back again, an extra week spent by the

way is not a very vital matter, and, though a long journey made by waggon would be costly, Taylor had money to spare, and was minded to please the little fellow.

But the gold fields proved as disappointing to Gordon as all the rest. Fields! They were no fields, only ugly stretches of red clay tunnelled everywhere like rabbit-burrows; the trenches filled with eager, sad-faced men, who seemed to Gordon to labour as doggedly and hopelessly as though they had been engaged on the commonest toil at home.

"Where is the gold?" Gordon asked, crestfallen.

"Ah, if they only knew that, poor chaps! It lies in dust in some of their claims, in nuggets in others; not at all in most; and the men are wasting their lives on the chance of finding it."

"But some do discover piles of it," Gordon said, still hugging his illusions.

"They did: one sitting under a tree and scraping the earth idly with his heel, lighted on a cake of gold worth nearly ten thousand pounds; others used to gather dust at the rate of five hundred pounds a day. Ah! they had a grand time for awhile; but it's long over, and I don't know that it made them happier while it lasted. These men here are not likely to find more than will pay them labourer's wage, though they slave fit to kill themselves."

"Then why do they, if they know that?"

"I don't know; it's a kind of disease, the gold fever. It gets into the blood, and then farewell contentment with common things. I once heard of a gambling chap who said that the next best pleasure after winning at cards was losing. Well, I think it's that way with the diggers; they would rather dig and find nothing, than take to regular labour."

Taylor seemed very fond of talking to Gordon, perhaps because he was fond of explaining things to himself.

"And you have dug for gold, you know all about it," Gordon said, sighing. In spite of the rough aspect the labour wore, there was, after all, something heroic in it to his fancy, and the man who had been through it all, who had abandoned its chances and changes for the certainty of something more secure, stood a little higher in his esteem thenceforward.

"Yes." Taylor turned with a sigh and looked about him vaguely. The glory of the setting sun was over all the land,

transfiguring it for a moment and lending it the charm it had worn for him a score of years before, when he was young. "Yes, and my heart went into every stroke of my tools, and my prayers into every pannikin of clay that I washed off. But that's all over twenty years ago, and the prizes I strove for have come to me slowly and otherwise than I had hoped, and that which was the motive of all my efforts has escaped me. I have just come back from the Old Country, and the friends I left there had forgotten me or were dead, the children were grown men and women, the young people old. One does not realise all time does for oneself till one comes face to face with friends, after twenty years. But after all I am content," sighing as he spoke. "People grow fond of sticks and stones when they have nothing else to love. I have got a good farm, and I'm proud of it, for I dug it myself foot by foot out of the Bush; and I've a comfortable house, built by these hands, and not bad as Bush farm-houses go; I made it as snug and cosy as I knew how, for I had a foolish hope that a friend from the old home would see it one day, and be pleased with it. That only showed my ignorance; people had ceased to care before the half of twenty years, and no doubt it is best so, for few things are worth waiting for so long. Well, well, the house and farm are there all the same, and there will be some farm servants and two sheep dogs ready to welcome us. And since you have settled to go with me, I hope you may find special good luck in the colony."

Until that moment Gordon had not quite realised that what had been done was done irrevocably, and that the width of the world lay between him and the woman he had always called mother.

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UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcoates," etc.

CHAPTER XXXVL

TILLY was a young person of some importance in her own small world. The people who are in want of money had been quick to scent the secret of her fortune, and her private charities at this time took a pretty wide range.

She considered the various appeals thrust at her and showered down upon her with an anxiety which had been wont to rouse Fred Temple's mirth, and which was severe and scrupulous in sifting their merits. Some matters of this kind, or it might be an interview with a dressmaker who tempted her with new patterns, or a milliner who came armed with seductions from Paris, kept her busy for an hour or two after her uncle left her. She was quite eager to fill up every moment of her morning, and to leave not a vacant chink in her thoughts for the intrusion of her late lover; but she had finished her business, such as it was, and was preparing to set out for the new house when Honoria presented herself at the door.

"Tilly," she said, "I must come in." And forthwith she came in. "I have something of immense importance to say to you."

She looked behind her at the shut door with an air of mystery.

"The whole boarding-house wanted to come with me," she said. "I've spoilt Miss Dicey's most engrossing chapter with my refusal, and I believe Mrs. Sherrington is making fatal blunders in spelling and missing out all the commas at this moment."

They all wanted to see how you would take it."

"Honoria, I haven't time for any nonsense," said Tilly, looking and feeling annoyed. "Take what?"

"The story I have to tell you."

"Oh, I'd rather not take it at all at present. I promised to meet my uncle. Your story can wait."

"It can't wait."

Tilly drew her watch from her belt, and laid it on the table.

"I will give you five minutes to tell it," she said. "The most important bit of it can be easily told in that time, and you can give me the boarders' comments another day."

She looked so resolute that Honoria was compelled to abandon mystery.

"Mr. White sent you a message by me," she said.

"Why didn't he give it to me himself?" said Tilly.

"Nothing would have pleased him better, poor man; but the necessity of persuading somebody to buy silk, or tea, or whatever it is, carried him off, and, since his body couldn't be in two places at once—and his spirit is useless for the present purpose—he charged me to give you this."

Honoria handed a little packet, wrapped in brown paper, across the table, and Tilly tore it open with an impatient indifference that contrasted with Honoria's solemnity. Of a sudden, however, her hands trembled and her gaze grew fixed. Within the wrapping was a small morocco case, and within the case lay the long-lost ring.

A hundred conflicting emotions were at work within her as she gazed down at the shining brilliant.

"Where did he get it?" she asked breathlessly.

"He said 'George' brought it."

"Who is 'George'?"

Tilly's voice was hard.

"'George,'" said Honoria, "is, as far as I can understand, a spirit who has attached himself to Mr. White. Think of our bald and rotund friend having anything so romantic as a familiar spirit belonging to him! If I had one who was able to do wonders like this; I shouldn't go travelling about urging people to buy tea and silk. I should demand to be made rich in some less tedious and humiliating way."

"Honoria," said Tilly, who was very pale, "I must know more of this. The loss of the ring caused a great deal of pain and bitterness, which may never be quite healed, and if there has been any trick——"

Her eyes flashed, and her hands, both of them closed round the little box, locked themselves tighter.

"My dear," said Honoria urgently, "if there has been any trickery, it is past your finding out or mine. I will tell you how it was. Last night, when you were shut up here with your uncle, we were all feeling rather dull downstairs, when someone proposed table-turning by way of entertainment. I suppose it was the rare presence of Mr. White in the drawing-room that suggested it. He was very unwilling at first. You know he believes in manifestations and mediums, and all that kind of thing, though he looks as if he believed in nothing but roast beef. The tables were lively enough, and oh, Tilly!" Honoria broke off to laugh, "you should have seen Mrs. Moxon frigidly mincing and skipping after that heavy centre table! It seemed as if she couldn't help it, though all the time she was shocked at its indecent abandonment——"

"But about the ring?"

Tilly could not spare even a smile for Mrs. Moxon.

"Well, I am coming to that. After we had done with the tables, some of us wanted to have a séance."

"A séance?" Tilly questioned, groping about to discover the bearing of all this on her restored trinket.

"A sort of 'at home' at which the guests are distinguished invisibles," said Honoria, with a touch of scorn crossing her solemnity. "They are not seen, but heard, like the famous Cock Lane Ghost, and it is a point with them to be received in the dark. We had no séance, however; Mrs. Drew didn't care about it, and neither did

the Major. I believe they think it wrong; so we fell to thought-reading instead. You haven't come across that worn-out craze! You choose your medium and put him out of the room; you all will that he shall do a certain thing, he, of course, being quite ignorant of what you fix on, and, if he is a mesmeric subject, or whatever else it is that he has got to be to prove a good medium, he will do it. As we had a pride in succeeding, if only to convert the Drews, we banished Mr. White; then we willed that he should find your ring."

"Who suggested that?" Tilly asked steadily.

"I did. We blindfolded him outside the door, and I took his hand to lead him in. Tilly," she broke off, "you believe that I didn't know where the ring was?"

Tilly waved away this question as if it were not worth an answer.

"Well, once we got inside the door, there was no question of my leading. It was he who led—blindfolded as he was—or rather dragged me along; we went straight across the room and stopped short in front of Mrs. Drew. All the others had crowded round to see what would happen. He withdrew his hand from mine, and groped in front of him—and there before our eyes, on Mrs. Drew's lap, this packet was lying."

"On Mrs. Drew's lap!" said Tilly, struggling with her amazement. Then the ridiculous side struck her, and she burst into a peal of laughter, in which Honoria joined her. It was such a lame and impotent conclusion to an experience which had been tragic. To have suffered and mourned all for this—it was weak—it was impertinent; it made her trouble, and John's too, into a mockery.

"Right in the middle of her black satin lap," said Honoria, when they had dried their eyes. "We saw it before Mr. White could feel for it; he couldn't have put it there. Can you remember what the packet looked like when you gave it to your cousin?"

"It was done up in brown paper, and I sealed it with my uncle's seal."

"A seal with his initials?"

"Yes."

Honoria nodded. "That is just how it was." She picked up the torn wrappings and pieced them together. "I didn't like to disturb you, so I undid the seal, because we thought there might be some deception, and that would have disappointed you."

"How did it get there?" Tilly demanded.

"I don't think 'George' explained that part of it," said Honoria drily. "I suppose he thought he had done enough. Mr. White is in a state of elation, and pride, and joy, which almost makes up for his regret at not having seen you. He means to ask your permission to place the whole story before the Psychical Research people."

"I think he had better wait a little for that—there may be a different story to tell. Why didn't you come to me last night?"

"I knew your uncle was ill; and besides, I thought it likely enough the ring might have disappeared before morning. It gave me a bad night, I can tell you! I believe I rose every quarter of an hour to see whether 'George' mightn't have reclaimed it."

Tilly looked down at the sparkling hoop.

"This must be gone into," she said.

"I wouldn't advise that," Honoria spoke strongly. "There's been too much ado already. If Mr. White hadn't taken himself off, I believe the house would have been emptied this morning. As it is, Mrs. Moxon is sure to start a little detective business on her own account; and you know how pleasant that will be! Nobody in the house has slept, and Mrs. Drew looks as if she wants comforting."

"She doesn't think——" Tilly began quickly.

"No; she has far too much good sense to worry herself with fancying you must suspect her, but she shrinks from the whole subject. She thinks it's—irreverent."

"Yes," Tilly said. "Tell me again who were present."

Honoria ran over the names of the boarders.

"Not Madame Drave?"

She shook her head. "You can't work it that way. She was out. I saw her go, and I heard her come back when we had all gone to our rooms. You can't make anything of it, Tilly, and, as you are leaving so soon, I wouldn't make a fuss if I were you. Let Mr. White enjoy his innocent triumph; it clears your cousin, any way, since nobody could suspect him of being in collusion with 'George.'"

She moved to the door, but she turned there.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

Tilly looked up as if she were waking from a dream.

"I'm going to my uncle," she said. She gathered up the fragments of paper, and slipped them, with the case containing the ring, into her pocket.

She did not mean to accept Honoria's advice. She had a healthy dislike to anything unexplained, and her mind was not undarkened by suspicion; but the first thing, as Honoria had pointed out, was to be glad on her cousin's account. He must be told that very day. Afterwards, she would begin her investigation. The shaping of circumstances hindered the carrying out of this part of the programme, however, and the loss and recovery of the ring remained an unsolved mystery.

Sometimes in later years, in discussing it with John Temple—who, as chief sufferer, had the deepest interest in the matter—she would allow the perplexities of the case to overcome her judgement, and would yield a kind of shivering half-belief to the supernatural agency which rendered everything clear to the exultant Mr. White; but John's soberer sense always forbade this solution.

"You gave me the wrong ring-case," he said, "and the person who appropriated the right one was, no doubt, afraid to keep it, and took this means of restoring it undiscovered."

"And how did it come into Mrs. Drew's possession, and how did Mr. White know it was there?"

This, however, belongs to the future; for the moment, as Tilly walked quickly towards the new home, she was content to look at the question as it concerned her cousin. Regarded from that point of view it was wholly satisfactory; the ring was found, and the most obstinate unbeliever could no longer accuse him of having taken it. She dismissed "George" with scorn, and occupied herself with rehearsing the meeting and reconciliation which should take place that very afternoon. Her thoughts even went out boldly to the time when John should take the place in her uncle's regard which Fred had forfeited.

When she reached the house and mounted the steps, she found the door open; somewhere in the neighbourhood a clock struck one, and before its vibration had died on the air the carpenters and painters, with that conscientious regard for his meal-hour which the British workman observes, trooped past her and dispersed themselves upon the pavement.

The wide hall into which she stepped was littered with shavings and scraps of gilding; she glanced into one or two of the lower rooms in search of her uncle, and she noticed that some of the newly-ordered furniture had been sent home by

mistake. It struck her amused fancy that the chairs and tables, swathed in their covering of matting, looked as awkward as unexpected and unwelcome guests, who are neither invited to sit down nor to remove their outer garments.

Not finding her uncle below, she ran lightly up to the great drawing-room. The tall windows, without curtain or blind, admitted the sunshine without hindrance, and it seemed to riot in the blank emptiness of the room. She looked across the space with half-dazzled eyes, and she wondered to see her uncle sitting exposed to the unstinted glow; he had carried up one of the new chairs, and he sat stooping forward a little, as if he were engrossed with some passing interest on the street below; his pipe, which he had smoked out, lay on the sill near his hand. He did not seem to hear her light step, and she wondered vaguely why he did not turn with his unfailing welcome when she called out to him:

"Here I am, dear, and I have a wonderful bit of news to tell you."

Still he did not turn or move.

As yet she suffered nothing but a deepening wonder that only served to colour her gaiety a little, not to quench it.

"Are you sleeping," she said, "or are you only pretending, to tease me? It is real news, and it will make you glad."

Still he made no sign, and now, with a sudden rush of disquiet and unworded dread, she went quickly to his side. She bent over him and took his unresisting hand; she chided him gently with lips that trembled.

"Wake up, dear, wake," she said. "It is not good for you to sleep in the sun; it will make you ill. Don't you hear me?" she implored; "it is Tilly; look up."

Then, with a terror that shook her to the very soul, she knelt and looked into the bowed face which would never more smile into her own. The eyes were wide, but they had no loving recognition in them; those clear eyes with the cairngorm glow were dim now, and sullied like the troubled waters of a pool on which Heaven frowns. Never more would they light with pleasure at sight of his little lass; never more would the man's poor common soul be shaken and tossed with shamed perplexities and matters too difficult for it; for in that gay spring morning Uncle Bob had kept his tryst with Death.

With a cry of anguish, which rang and echoed in the big, empty room, Tilly fell

forward, her arms flung across the dead man's knees.

About this time Mr. Behrens, who had duly received the message left for him at Madame Drave's establishment, arrived at the door of the new house, and, finding it ajar, walked in.

His habitual languor covered a very determined mood. Once he had yielded his claim out of grace to Miss Barton; a second time he had foregone it out of necessity; on this occasion he could imagine no combination of circumstances which could shake his resolution. The "Oil and Herring Company" was floated, and other matters of even larger import were in hand; but, for the success of these, that promised signature was necessary, and that signature he meant to obtain if he had to snatch his client from the clutch of death to make it. This he said to himself with a smile that seemed to promise an easy victory. He followed Tilly's example by glancing first into the lower rooms, and then, like her, he went upstairs.

He had not been upstairs three minutes when he came down again; but three minutes had sufficed for the arrival of another visitor.

As he came downstairs, with a step that fell harshly on the silence of the empty house, a lady, who had been delicately poking the point of her parasol between the coverings of the new furniture, came out of the dining-room with a prim rustle of her skirts over the shavings, and faced him.

"Good-morning," said Mrs. Moxon, with amiable condescension. "You have been looking at the new house? I happened to be passing, and glanced in. But ah, dear me, all this lavish expenditure will not buy birth, or culture, or position!"

She shook her modestly-bugled head as if to give to this truly original sentiment the weight of her personal conviction.

Behrens looked at her with a white face, on which a heavy frown had gathered.

He only uttered one word in reply; but he hurled it at the poor lady as if it yielded him some personal relief to shatter her.

It was an expression in the existence of which Mrs. Moxon had declined to believe; never in all her decorous life had it assailed her ears. She fell back before it with a frozen, incredulous horror and indignation agitating her prim face.

Behrens strode past her uncaring, and

went out into the sunlight; but the next moment he returned.

"Go upstairs," he commanded her. "You are a woman. If you have any of the feelings of one, you have a chance of exercising them now. Do you hear me? You are wanted there. Go."

And in fear and trembling, with tottering limbs and a heart that throbbed and pulsed as never before in that placid, unemotional bosom, Mrs. Moxon obeyed.

A LONDON SUBURB.

IN these days the search for the romance of Greater London is heart-breaking work. But there is plenty of romance left in the Metropolis itself, if we know how and where to look for it, for there are entire neighbourhoods upon which the destroying hands of time and man have fallen gently; and even amongst those parts which have been transformed out of recognition, there are dotted links—historic, legendary, and romantic—which serve to bind the present to the past.

But, to create Greater London, the destroyer has done his work rapidly and thoroughly; so rapidly, that a man may easily lose his way in his native village, after an absence of a very few years; so thoroughly, that only in the christening of streets, is any memory of what was kept up.

Pleasant, old-world villages like Beckenham and Wimbledon have been knocked out of shape, and put together again in an incongruous fashion; breezy heaths, like Putney and Wandsworth, have been filched from the people, lacerated by railway lines, and crowded with jerry-built villas; stretches of woodland, like those at Sydenham and at Norwood, have been clean swept away; old churches have given way to barn-like monstrosities with pimples, called belfries, sticking on their roofs; lanes have developed into main roads, field-paths have been blocked up, ancestral trees cut down, ponds drained, rivers driven underground to play the part of sewers, old manor-houses, old inns, old cottages pulled down, so that for fifteen miles out of London, in more than one direction, one may travel through an almost unbroken avenue of houses.

Yet, occasionally we find our romance where it might be least looked for, and Blackheath is a case in point; for around no place, perhaps, so near London, does so

much romance hang, and no place probably, except Dulwich, retains, in such a comparatively unaltered degree, its old features.

The creating-destroyer has run his parallels up to the very foot of the hill, on the top of which is our grand old heath; but there he has stopped—not, however, without many a persistent effort to push on.

Blackheath village still has an old-world air about it in spite of its bustle and animation, and away westwards we are in a land of grand, old-fashioned, brown-brick houses, with white-bound windows, built in a solid, respectable style, liberally supplied with gardens, in addition to the breezy stretch of crisp, short grass which stretches in front of them as far as Greenwich Park Wall.

When we descend to Lewisham, or get away behind the Green Man, or Saint Germain's Terrace, we are in villa-land; but Blackheath itself is intact, save at one spot in its very centre, where Talbot Villas deform the panorama.

In spite of holiday-makers, and donkeys, and hordes of "young barbarians at play," there is a wonderful romance about this old green London lung, which at certain seasons well merits its name of Black, or Bleak Heath. The very configuration of the ground courts enquiry; all these ridges and depressions and mounds are, doubtless, receptacles of buried history; and the pick and shovel of the judicious explorer, we feel sure, would bring to light many a strange relic of the old days. We have seen youngsters scrambling for a touch-down at football by a bank which we could say positively had been the vallum of a fortification; we have heard an enthusiastic old golf-player heap maledictions on an old camp fosse, in which his ball, at a critical moment, had lodged; and we have beheld school-fights in Greenwich Park, for the possession of a tree-crowned mound, which probably hides the skeleton of some old mail-clad warrior, buried there with his arms, and his charger, and perhaps a favourite henchman or two.

At any rate, the mound named after Jack Cade—for many years a carpet-beating "pitch," but now neatly planted and railed in—is a barrow or a tumulus, and old Watling Street runs straight across the heath in the direction of Shooter's Hill.

It is worth standing for a few minutes on a bright, quiet morning, when the heath is almost deserted, and try to picture the various scenes enacted here in history. We

may be quite sure that if the Britons made a fight anywhere for their town on the Thames against the Romans coming up along Watling Street, it would be here, and possibly the twisted and contorted ground may tell of their entrenchments captured and remade by their conquerors. We know that it was here that the address and presence of mind of Richard the Second and his Queen prevented London from being invaded and sacked by Wat Tyler and his Kentish men; and that it was from the mound above alluded to that Jack Cade addressed his mob; here Henry the Fifth was received after Agincourt by the authorities of London; here the battle was fought which crushed Flammoek's rebellion in 1519; here Henry the Eighth met Anne of Cleves; and here the citizens of London and Monk's army greeted Charles the Second on Royal Oak Day, 1660. Royalty and Blackheath, indeed, must always have been very closely associated together. Edward the Fourth, who created Royal Greenwich, must have known it. To Henry the Eighth, Edward the Sixth, Mary and Elizabeth, all born at Greenwich, it must have been familiar, if only as lying across the road to Eltham. Catharine of Arragon, Anne of Cleves, and Anne Boleyn, James the First, Charles the Second, James the Second, William the Third and Mary, must all from their Greenwich Palace have penetrated, upon hunting expeditions and other occasions, to the dark plateau of furze and morass which came up to the boundaries of the Royal demesne.

When Eltham Palace was a favourite Royal residence, we can readily understand that Henry the Third, Edward the Second, Edward the Third, Richard the Second, Henry the Fourth, Henry the Fifth, Henry the Seventh, and James the First—who all lived there—preferred the journey to London by water from Greenwich to the terrible toiling along the old track which was called the London Road.

Peter the Great must have often gone to Blackheath from Deptford, and we may be sure that Sir Adam Newton, the strict tutor of James the First's darling son, Prince Henry, often took him for a constitutional, from Charlton House, over wild Blackheath.

But interesting as Blackheath itself is, from its historical associations, it is rather by the light of the relics which have come down to us of social life, that we are drawn to it.

Of course, as being a weird, lonely spot on one of the most frequented high-roads in the country, Blackheath was a happy hunting-ground for those miserable, cowardly rascals categorised by an ignorant later age as "gentlemen of the road."

The old Green Man Inn—alas! transformed of late years, in accordance with the spirit of the age, into a palatial gin-shop—was a famous house of call both for highwaymen and their victims. There are many of us yet, without doubt, by no means in the sere and yellow leaf of life, who can recall the ancient hostelry, presided over by the two old maiden ladies who seemed immortal, with its dark old rooms and its pleasant garden, and the low-ceilinged bar, with its glass case of ancient china and curious silver. Here the Dover down coaches, which generally started from one of the old Borough inns, changed horses, and here travellers of distinction, who wished to appear in clean and fine array in the capital, generally broke their townward journey, although the Bricklayers' Arms, in the Old Kent Road—if we may judge by the list of distinguished patrons which hangs, or hung, in its bar—must have been a close rival. Hence it may be imagined that, if news of wealth on the road was to be obtained by bribery or cajolery, it would be at the Green Man.

Two other famous houses patronised by these gentlemen, were the little inn which stood where now stands the Sun in the Sands public-house, on the Shooter's Hill road, and the Brockley Jack.

The latter presents the same appearance which it must have presented to the highwaymen of past years, who, with Bow Street at their heels, made a straight cut across country from Blackheath by way of Lewisham and Lady Well, and found a ready shelter in the depths of the old inn. The "Jack," of course, means the two-handled leather bottle of old times, and has nothing to do with the green-painted piece of whale's jaw which hangs from the elm in front of the inn, and which is said to have been placed there by a former landlord who made his "pile" in the North Sea.

The fields behind the Brockley Jack, now cut into by the Brighton Railway, were once famous for duels and prize-fights; and the story is still told of the dire combat between a Captain Turnbull, recruiting in these parts, and a Brockley waggoner, who resented the Captain's

attentions to his sweetheart, the pretty barmaid of the Jack. To accommodate the rustic, the battle was with fists, and the waggoner dealt the Captain such a blow behind the ear that he fell dead. On another occasion two merchant skippers from Greenwich fought with swords until each transfixed the other.

Riverside smugglers also found the Jack a convenient depôt for their goods, and within the memory of man, by a little extra payment, a bottle might have been had of extra-fine liquor which had never paid duty, and which had been "left till called for," by enterprising merchants who never lived to call for it.

But to return to Blackheath.

At the Deptford corner of Greenwich Park, a cluster of fine old houses carries us back to past days. At Brunswick House lived Lord Chesterfield, who gave his name to the quiet shady walk under the Park wall; here, also, the unhappy consort of the "first gentleman in Europe," Queen Caroline, lived in retirement; and in our own time, Prince Arthur, now Duke of Connaught, stayed at the Ranger's House with his tutor.

Between this corner and the gravel-pit surmounted by the guns, are the most remarkable of those irregularities of the ground, which lead us to think that all this pair of the heath must have been entrenched in olden times. There are some fine old houses standing about here, but we cannot learn if they have historical associations. In Eliot Place—another retired terrace of old Blackheath houses—was the famous private school of the Reverend Cowley Powles, the schoolfellow and life-friend of Charles Kingsley; and we give upon hearsay the tradition, that the patch of heath in front of Eliot Place, and for many years tacitly recognised as the school playing-field, was, in the early part of the century, a favourite duelling-ground.

Crossing the heath by Blackheath Vale—a colony of houses congregated in an old gravel-pit—by the Princess of Wales Inn, and the three splendid houses which form South Row, we reach a quiet corner of Blackheath, known as the Paragon—a crescent of old-fashioned houses, which remind one of Bath, faced by a level bit of ground, once the ground of the famous Blackheath Paragon Cricket Club, now succeeded by the Morden. From this corner we get to tranquil, peaceful Morden College, a typical haven of rest for old commercial gladiators, surrounded by

pleasant gardens, and commanding views over the fields to Eltham. The fields, we believe, are gradually being encroached upon by the omnivorous builder; but a few years ago they were quiet and remote enough to be fifty miles from London. The lane bordering them became suddenly notorious some years back, from being the scene of what was known as the Eltham murder; and we remember that at the time the sensation was so great, that for many hundred yards on each side of the fatal spot, the hedge was rooted up and carried away by relic-hunters. Kidbrooke Lane, as it is called, joins the Eltham road at Well Hall, of which the outhouses have every appearance of having been fortified in old days. There is still a moat round part of the house, and a late owner informed us that a subterranean passage was discovered some years back, connecting Well Hall with the old Royal Palace at Eltham.

Eltham is a pretty and pleasant place itself, but to the romance-hunter, its interest is centred in that one ivy-covered ruin, which is the only relic of once famous Eltham Palace. The approach by the bridge leading over what once was the Palace moat is charming, and the peep through the lodge gate of the remains and the grand old Tudor house to which they are attached, is well worthy of a page in a sketch-book.

As we stand in this old banquetting-hall, saved from sharing the fate of the rest of the Palace, by the mere chance that it promised to make a good barn, and as such was used for more than a century. It is difficult to realise that it has been intimately associated with the social life of twelve of our sovereigns, beginning with Henry the Third and ending with James the First; that, where nineteenth-century lads and lasses now play tennis, Richard the Second, Henry the Fourth, and Henry the Eighth kept Christmas; John of France, captured at Poitiers, was feasted by Edward the Third; and the children of Henry the Seventh romped.

Careful observation of the fields stretching in the direction of the railway shows what are evidently the party-walls of ancient buildings, and from the extent of ground covered by these, we can almost understand that, when Richard the Second kept court here, his attendant army of guests, and lords, and retainers, and domestics numbered ten thousand men and women, according to the declaration of Holinshed.

Eltham Palace, a sermon in stones on the text, "*sic transit gloria mundi*," reminds us of three other not very distant Palaces, whose fall from high estate to comparative insignificance has been equally remarkable—that at Croydon, that at Charing near Ashford, and that at Otford near Sevenoaks.

"Long, lazy, lousy Lewisham," as Queen Bees is said to have described a village which would not turn out on a cold, dark winter's morning to greet Her Majesty, who happened to pass through it, retains very few of its old features. The Old White Hart Inn—said to have been the oldest inn in Kent—has quite recently been robbed of its primitive gables and projecting windows, and turned into a "pub." Colfe's Grammar School, on Eliot Hill; the old Alms Houses, near the church, with the line of old houses adjoining them, remain. All the rest is new villa and modern shop.

Till recently, the fields behind the houses running to the classic Ravensbourne river were pleasant retreats after the noise and bustle of a high-road, which has been noisy and busy ever since the time when Dudley, Lord North, discovered the efficacy of the Tunbridge Wells. But they are doomed; indeed, they are parcelled out and built upon to a great extent, and Lewisham must go to Blackheath for its fresh air.

Exception may be taken to the investment of the poor little Ravensbourne stream with any importance whatever, much more for terming it classic. But does it not rise under the wall of Cæsar's mighty camp at Keston, its existence, so says a local tradition, being manifested to the weary and thirsting legionaries by the flight of a raven? And does not Lewisham know fully to its cost how, in rainy weather, the streamlet can assume the size and force of a raging river, and lay broad acres under its waters?

But the very fact that Lewisham, and Lee, and Deptford folk make Blackheath their playground, and that it has become a recognised lung of London, drives the old Blackheath resident off the heath to seek his diversion elsewhere. On a Saturday afternoon in the cricket or football season, when every square foot of level ground is appropriated, it is much to be doubted if five per cent. of the players and onlookers belong to Blackheath. Hence the famous Blackheath Football Club have transported their red and black flags a couple of miles off, to the Rectory Field

at Charlton; and, although the beauty and fashion of Blackheath love the quaint village exceedingly, nursemaids are often warned not to air their charges on the plebeian heath, but to take them to the calmer and more sedate atmosphere of the Park; for, since the abolition of Greenwich Fair, the Park has sobered in aspect, and even on Bank Holidays is by no means so crowded as it used to be.

Of Greenwich Park, with its innumerable associations, it is hardly necessary to say much, for there is nothing new to be said about it. It remains unparalleled, near London, as a noble breathing space, and as a specimen of sylvan scenery; and, if we are inclined to ask by whose authority so much of it on the Chesterfield Walk side has been snatched away and walled off for private use, we soon forget our resentment in the enjoyment of the remainder.

A gate on the north-east side, or, to be clearer, in the right-hand Park wall as we face the Hospital and the river, takes us to Vanbrugh Castle, a fantastic edifice built by that ponderous architect.

Here a sad shock awaits the lover of old Blackheath. Where formerly there stretched the undulating beauty of Westcombe Park, the building fiend has penetrated, and one of those pretty sylvan bits, which made the old Charlton Road so attractive, has gone the way of so much that served to win for the suburbs of London the fame of being the prettiest suburbs in Europe.

Charlton House is, of course, the local "lion," and, as seen from the road, presents the ideal picture of one of those ancient halls of Kent, so famous in legend and history, ranking, as it fitly does, with Knowle, Cobham, Penshurst, and Hever. Historically it is chiefly associated with the residence of Prince Henry, the eldest son of James the First, a promising Prince and a popular darling, who was cut off at the early age of eighteen. The house, we believe, is not shown, but the grounds are frequently thrown open on public occasions, such as bazaars, athletic sports, and volunteer field-days; and, rambling beneath the stately trees which are the grand feature of the domain, one can hardly realise that one is within a twenty minutes' railway journey of the metropolis, and that for miles around stretches an almost unbroken brick-and-mortar world. Old Charlton Church is picturesquely placed on a hill, overlooking wooded slopes and the river; but, although its time-softened red

brick blends harmoniously with the foliage about, and makes it a pretty subject for a sketch, there is little of interest within.

Charlton Fair, a relic of the historic Horn Fair, was, until within twenty years ago, a rowdy institution of the wildest character, and there are many who may remember that not the least turbulent spirits of the Saturnalia were the detachments of athletic young gentlemen from the adjacent "Shop" at Woolwich and the various cramming establishments about it, who made it an annual point of honour to practise their prowess on the cockney roughs of the fair. The fair, however, is a thing of the past, and Old Charlton village jogs quietly through the year, without much to break the monotony.

To bid farewell to Blackheath, without some allusion to its fame as an athletic centre, would be to leave a duty half-performed.

If we wished to impress our old friend, the "intelligent foreigner," with practical proof that Young England—and for the matter of that, Veteran England, of to-day—is in no way physically degenerate, we would ask him to accompany us to Blackheath on a Saturday afternoon, at no matter what season of the year.

The scene on a fine summer afternoon, when in every nook and corner, on every twenty-two yards patch approximately level, white-clad cricketers of all ages, and of all classes, are engaged in the grand old national game, is one not easily to be forgotten, for twenty or thirty clubs play on Blackheath, whilst every one of the many schools of the neighbourhood sends its quota.

In between the cricket-pitches wind the red-coated members of the Royal Blackheath Golf Club, an institution founded, we believe, by King James the First, claiming the seniority of all clubs in England, in which country for many years it was the only Golf Club, and not far from being the most ancient in Britain. The enthusiasm of a golfer can only be appreciated by a player; but the veriest outsider who sneers at the notion of walking many miles, hitting and coaxing hard balls into small holes, admits that there must be a hidden charm in a pastime, which takes middle-aged and white-haired men out in all weathers, at all hours of daylight, at any season of the year.

But perhaps it is for football that Blackheath is most famous, and Blackheath is so Conservative in its football notions, that

out of the sixty or seventy matches played there every winter Saturday afternoon, hardly half-a-dozen are played according to the Association code.

But Blackheath football has undergone a wondrous change within the last twenty years. The old game, as we remember it, when "hacking" and tripping were in vogue, often degenerated into a free fight, during which the main object of the game, the driving of the ball over the cross-bar, was entirely lost sight of. When two rival "crammers," or two rival schools, met in those days, our intelligent visitor from over the water might well have been pardoned for describing young Englishmen as rank barbarians. On one occasion, we remember, Blackheath village was almost in a state of siege for several hours, owing to the passions of the partisans of two rival army-tutor establishments culminating in a fight, to which Town and Gown at Oxford was child's play.

Now, however, the game as played at Blackheath requires a great deal more than mere brute strength and animal courage, and those who have witnessed a crack match in the Rectory Field—say Blackheath against Richmond, or Bradford, or the London Scottish—are generally converted from whatever prejudices they may have brought with them, and go away anticipating the next encounter with pleasure.

La Crosse is also played to some extent; paper-chasing is very popular; and an occasional game of hockey may be seen; but it is by its football and its golf that Blackheath is best known.

A WIFE, AND A FRIEND.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

MURIEL stood one evening at the window lighting the lamps. There had been a long frost, but it had broken now, and the day had been damp and cloudy. Max, coming in from the farm, stood at the door watching her. She had not seen him, and there was a sad, hopeless look on her face, which went to his heart like a child's cry. He remembered, for the first time, that he had seen her look like that when sleeping, or when he had caught her face off guard during his illness.

Was it possible that she suffered? Was her fault a burden and a shame to her? Oh, if that were so, would it not be pos-

sible that, between them, they might outlive it? If it were so, he had failed in his duty to her. She had been suffering, and he had held aloof; she had been in trouble, and he had not helped her. For the first time in her presence he felt it possible to speak.

Muriel turned from the lamp and drew down all the blinds but one.

"I don't want the beacon to-night, Muriel," he said, "I am home already."

She turned to him brightly, with her old smile; but somehow Max had liked the sad look better.

"I am so glad you are home early, we can have a cosy talk before dinner. You won't mind dinner being a little late, to-night? Mr. May is coming. We had better leave the beacon for him."

Max hated Philip May's visits. He saw the effort it cost his old friend to sit at the table of a man he believed to have wronged him so deeply; and seemed himself to feel all the pain of the struggle. He knew that he was forgiven—for Muriel's sake—and was as bitterly humiliated by the forgiveness as if he had stood in need of it. Then he saw that Muriel feared the man to whom she had lied—and that hurt him most of all. It seemed to him, when they were together, that he bore the shame of all three.

He only asked carelessly why May need be late.

"He has been to Oxford, and could not reach Denham station till 6.30," Muriel said, "but he has promised to ride across the fields, over the wooden bridge, so as not to keep us waiting a moment longer than he can help."

"He can't do that," said Max. "I locked the gate leading off Denham Road to the field path this morning, when I went through, because the bridge was not safe; the floating ice on the river has all but broken it down. It was all I could do to get over safely, so I locked the gate, lest anyone should chance to come through our fields. May will have to come by the road."

"The bridge not safe!" cried Muriel. "Oh, Max; and Philip was so anxious not to keep us waiting, that I let him take my key."

"Then I must go and meet him. The bridge would scarcely bear me this morning, it is not likely to bear him and his horse to-night."

"Don't go out again in such weather: send one of the men."

"They have gone home; besides, I couldn't send the poor fellows out, after a day's work."

"But you are not well enough to go out in the cold."

"Poor old Phil will be drowned if I don't."

By this time he had reached the hall-door, and she had followed him. He turned back to kiss her, and then hurried out.

"Max, I don't want you to go," she called after him; "come back soon to me, darling."

The words followed him down the damp road; he turned for one last look as she stood in the doorway, and then hurried down the road.

The short cut from Denham main road lay straight through the fields, then along by the side of the river for some hundred yards, then, turning sharply, went over the bridge, and from thence straight towards the light in Muriel's window. Crossing the bridge being out of the question, Max intended, when he reached it, to leave the path and station himself in the field by the river, opposite that part of the path which lay along the further bank; from thence he could shout a warning to his friend.

He hurried across the fields, breathless and anxious, but full of a new hope. Muriel's parting words rang like the refrain of a song in his ears. Muriel's sadness was an augury of hope.

He neared the bridge; but, when he was about to turn off into the fields, he saw he was too late, for there was May, riding rapidly along the path beside the river; he would turn the corner on to the bridge before Max could stop him. There was no chance of warning him except by the bridge. Max got almost half across it, but the middle part had been entirely carried away since the morning. He held on to a rail and shouted. He was just in time, for he heard Philip's horse splash through the mud at the corner, and he shouted again with all his strength:

"Back! Back, I say, Phil! Don't try to cross. The bridge is broken."

And he threw up his arms to startle the horse, lest Philip should not have time to stop it.

Max saw the horse rear and start back. He saw that Philip had sprung to the ground and was safe. Then the slippery board on which he stood seemed to glide from under his feet. He clutched at the rail,

and heard it break. He tried to seize something—anything to save himself, and his hands only held the cold water. Something seemed to strike his head and blind him. "Max, I don't want you to go. Come back soon to me, darling." The words sounded in his ears through the darkness, and blindness, and strange, numb pain, so that he did not hear the rushing of the waters as they closed over him.

"Max, I don't want you to go. Come back soon to me, darling."

There was an awful stillness in the room, the air was filled with the heavy scent of hothouse flowers, the blinds were drawn, and the cold January sunlight shone dully through them, just touching with pale light the sharp outlines of the long, still figure that lay, covered with a white sheet, on the bed.

"Max, I don't want you to go. Come back soon to me, darling."

The words broke through the silence, and darkness, and heavy shadows. Did he hear them, or speak them, or were they but a memory? Everything was still and dim, and Max fancied those words the last thought of life, as he sank in the river.

But no, the dark shadows were lifting, and slowly Max began to realise that he was returning to life, not leaving it. He tried to raise his hands, as they lay crossed on his breast, but could not. He opened his eyes for a second, but found his face was covered. Then he understood what had happened, and where he was, and knew that his friends had thought him dead.

He knew this, but only dimly; not with fear or horror, but with dreamy wonder. Presently, of course, someone would come into the room, and he would speak, and they would lift the handkerchief from his face, and take his hands and lift him up from out the darkness and the shadow of death.

He tried to cry out, that he might know if he had strength to make himself heard; but his voice sounded so weak, and strange, and far off, that he could not tell whether that, too, were not a memory.

Then he heard other sounds, indistinct at first, then more clearly, footsteps, and voices, and the sound of weeping, and he prayed for more strength, because Muriel was weeping for him, and he had no voice to tell her he was alive.

She was speaking.

"Philip, you are not angry with him now?"

And Philip answered: "Heaven forbid, when he lies there in my stead, and when I have found my friend again, who was lost beyond all hope!"

"But he is dead—dead!" she sobbed.

"I can understand this," went on Philip, "this is in keeping. I think he is satisfied with himself, now. He wronged you, and me, Muriel, and he wronged himself most of all; but he has atoned to all three, now—to me, for he died for me; to you, for he has freed you; and to himself, for he has washed out the one stain on his honour. We all three can say, 'It is well.' Far better that he should lie there, than live—fearing to meet my eyes, or touch your hand."

"Speak well of him. I want to hear you speak well of him. Say you feel no bitterness against him, now."

"I can speak well of him, for I have felt no bitterness against him these many days. You know what I felt and said, at first; but afterwards, Muriel, did not you, his wife, see? The shame of that treachery was breaking his heart."

Muriel gave a little cry, and Philip went on:

"When I remembered all the years of his true, noble life, and our long friendship, with never a cloud or a doubt, I thought, that if his falseness had wounded me, it had killed him, for he could never be the Max Simmond he and I had known, any more—and he knew it, too."

Let her speak now; here in the presence of her dead husband let her speak, and say the falsehood was hers, not his; and that she—she only—in her childish vanity which could not bear to be blamed, in her miserable, cowardly fear of deserved reproaches, had slandered the noblest husband, the truest friend, that ever lived.

She only sobbed out his name, and broke again into wild weeping; and Philip spoke again:

"But you and I belong to each other, Muriel; nothing can change that. It is no wrong to him, it is part of his atonement, that we should say so here—and now."

"Philip! Philip! Not now—not now."

"Yes, now. Between you and me, who know the story, there must be no deceit; but because no one else must ever know it, no form, no observance respect for his

memory requires, shall be forgotten. I will go away for a year; when I return I shall find you waiting for me. No matter how he won you, you have been his wife; be his widow for that time, and, till the end of that time, I will not so much as touch your hand—for his sake."

Let her speak now, and he would answer her. Yes, let her speak while he could answer her. At first, as he had heard Philip's words, the effort had not been to utter, but to hold back that faint cry, the breathing of which would have been life; but now he was falling back into the abyss, the heavy sleep was laying hold on him again, the darkness and clouds were closing round him. Let her speak while he could yet hear; let her speak, if not for truth's sake and for justice, in very pity of the great love he had borne her.

He heard her sobs more and more faintly, he felt his weak hold on life unloosing. Then Philip said:

"Will you leave me alone with him?"

And in the silence and darkness he felt Philip had drawn nearer, and had lifted the covering from his face. The shadows were very close to him now; but Max knew that his old friend had kissed him before he died.

But at the very gates of the other world Muriel's voice called him back—strong, and clear, and passionate:

"I have come back to tell you the truth, Philip May. Heaven knows, I have been false enough to you, but never yet to him. I never loved you. When I was engaged to you I did not know what love was; but when I met Max I knew. When you left me in anger I was glad to be free, for I knew Max loved me. He may have been false to you, but only I can know how true he has been to me, and how forgiving, for I was so afraid he would despise me, or perhaps refuse to marry a woman who had deserted his friend, that I told him I had never been engaged to you; he forgave that, though he must have known it was a falsehood. When he withheld the letter——"

"But, Muriel, I gave you the letter."

The words came faint, but distinct, from beneath the white covering. With a cry of fearful delight Muriel and Philip sprang forward, and for a few moments all was confusion and amaze. And when help was brought and restoratives applied, and the terrible bruise—made by the falling wood of the bridge—which had caused the long stupor, had been found under his hair,

he and they began to understand what had happened. He lay there, with Philip May on one side of him, giving him brandy, and Muriel on the other, with his head on her breast, begging him to wait a little before he asked questions, and only to think how much they both loved him, and how glad they were to have him back again; and he protested feebly, that he must speak now, for this was more than life to him. If she loved him, why did she make Philip think he had not given her the letter? For he did give it to her.

She told him, soothingly, not to think about it. It was past now, and Philip had forgiven him, and she was glad of what he had done.

Then he begged her, piteously, to make him understand, for he was very tired, and confused, and could not remember well; but, truly, he thought he had given her the letter.

She made a gesture of entreaty to Philip to leave them, while she reminded him; but Philip refused, and stayed, leaning against the wall.

Muriel bent down till her lips were close to her husband's ear, and said softly: "In the letter Philip May wrote to me, he asked my forgiveness for a quarrel, and begged me to keep my promise to him. In the letter you saw me burn there was nothing but the one word, 'Good-bye.'"

"Great Heaven! Max—Muriel," cried Philip, "we have all been breaking our hearts for a mistake; and I am to blame. I wrote that 'Good-bye' first; then, when I got over my anger, I wrote, as I said, begging forgiveness. I must have given you the wrong letter, Max, and you did deliver it."

"Ah, yes!" said Muriel; "and I let you think he had given me no letter, because, when I heard your story, I thought he had forged that which he did give me."

Her voice sounded strange and bitter. She stood apart from them both—her hands clasped tightly together, her face white and ashamed.

Max began, with a painful effort, to tell them what he had heard, and what he had thought since; but, at the first word or two, Muriel stopped him, saying he must not tire himself.

"I have misjudged you, Max, old friend," said Philip; "and caused you both terrible misery. Will you forgive me? And then we will ask Muriel to forgive us."

Max took his friend's hand, and turned his eyes eagerly to his wife.

"Muriel, I have thought so ill of you."

Muriel came forward; her voice was sad and grave, but her face resolute.

"No," she said; "let no one be blamed but me, for I have caused all this. Max, if I had been as true a woman as you are a true man, you would never have doubted me; but your own instinct of truth felt the want of truth in me. And, if it had not been for my falseness, I should have recognised your truth, and should have known that there must be some terrible mistake. Max, all my life long I have been false in little things. I have so hated discomfort and trouble, and I so longed for everyone to think well of me, and praise me, that I did not think it very wicked to avoid what distressed me, or to gain what I desired—to make life pleasant—by little, easy falsehoods. Max, that night Philip came here first, you tried to make me speak, and I would not, not knowing what you had heard. I supposed you were only thinking of my old engagement to Philip—you see, from what Philip had told me, I supposed you knew of it—and I thought I would rather coax you into forgetting it, than have any trouble about it. If I had but spoken then, or, better still, if I had but told the truth at first! Even that lie I told to shield you was a sin, and has helped to bring about this. But, oh! Max, if I have been weak in all else, I have been strong in this—that I have loved you. If you believe no other good of me, believe that. And yet, perhaps, if you were to forgive me, if you were still to be gentle and patient with me, and help me, who can tell, but by Heaven's grace I might so mend my poor, pitiful, cowardly nature, that some day I should be worthy of you, and you could love me again!"

She had begun to speak standing far off, tearless and despairing. She ended sobbing on her knees beside him. Max stretched out his arms and drew her close to his heart.

Philip turned silently away, leaving the husband and wife alone together.

"It is best as it is," he said. "I had lost her long ago; and I have my friend still."

A COUNTRY PITCH.

"Ah! things ain't what they was!" and thus having accounted for what a cocoa-nut "pitch" proprietor called the "badness of business," the showman patted,

with much artistic care, the pillow of the carefully-adjusted arrangement which was said to indicate upon the dial the exact weight you struck, drew forth his short pipe, solemnly filled it, and, having taken another disgusted survey of the surroundings, and made several unsuccessful efforts to induce the bystanders to patronise him, lit up and puffed away.

The scene was the outskirts of a small town in the heart of Dorset; the time, evening. All day long the rain had been falling steadily, abating just sufficiently between five and six o'clock for the showman to cherish the hope that, after all, a little business might be done. The show, which contained a couple of dwarfs and the tallest woman ever exhibited in England, and to which one shooting-gallery, one boxing-saloon, a couple of gingerbread stalls, the aforesaid delicately-adjusted machine for ascertaining ("to the hounce") the weight you struck, and one or two minor affairs, was making its way to one of the good old English fairs which are still held. Thinking that business might be done in the town, a halt had been called, tents had been pitched, and every preparation made for doing a "roaring" trade.

But Hodge is not so enamoured of shows and the usual paraphernalia of a fair as he was some years ago. "Old times are changed, old manners gone," and with the alteration in his surroundings Hodge himself has altered. In most agricultural districts the pleasant "swish" of the scythe has given place to the sharp click of the reaping-machine; the old mode of threshing has been superseded by steam machinery, with the inevitable traction engine in close proximity; and the moss-covered, dilapidated gates and the wooden hurdles are fast being replaced by the aggressively new articles of Birmingham manufacture, which are at once suggestive of town, with its bustle and smoke, and of the familiar warning, "Mind the paint!" With the increase of "scientific agriculture" such changes are doubtless inevitable; but they are none the less jarring to all who love rural simplicity.

Herr Kummer, the Swiss statistician, calculates that Europe will contain, at the end of the twentieth century, five hundred and sixty-five million eight hundred and one thousand one hundred and forty-one human beings, and the United Kingdom one hundred and twenty-nine millions; and in that event this country would be more thickly populated than ever country

was before; every waste place would be turned to account, and all the poetry would be completely taken out of some of the prettiest of English "beauty-spots." Rural simplicity would, in short, be a thing of the past.

Some of these changes are gradually taking place; and it is therefore not surprising that the Hodge of to-day is very different from the Hodge depicted by the cartoonists and professional humorists of a past generation. The simple country joekin, who is wont to scratch his head or pull his forelock when asked a question, is still seen on the stage and in some cartoons—and there only. With this improvement in Hodge's intelligence, there has been a corresponding falling off in his love of shows and the like; and this fact, together with the depressing weather, accounted for the slight patronage which this show received at this essentially country pitch.

The dwarfs, with the additional attraction of a tall woman, failed to attract many sightseers. Of the other inducements for spending money, the cocoa-nut games were the most successful, and the boxing-saloon the least. Whether it was that the dew-like rain damped the ardour of the assembled crowd, or that the proprietor, who offered half-a-crown to anyone who would "have a go" with him, looked too aggressive and business-like, is uncertain; but, at any rate, the agricultural labourers fought particularly shy of the temple dedicated to the noble art of self-defence; and, as the proprietor had no assistant except a miserable-looking woman, with whom he cracked very small and decrepit jokes, for the purpose of putting his audience in a good humour, his temple was closed at an early hour. Soon after nine o'clock, with many oburgations on the unappreciativeness of mankind in general, and of the Dorset agriculturists in particular, he packed up his tent, and prepared everything for removal at an early hour the following morning.

As the rain continued to fall with monotonous regularity, most of the other showmen began to make preparations for closing. The discarded dress of the tall woman, and the old shirt of the smallest man in the world, were taken from the poles on which they had been displayed as baits, and were stowed away to keep the organ and the big drum company; the shooting-tubes were withdrawn; the cocoa-nuts were picked up; the sawdust-like gingerbreads were returned to very large

tin cans—to prevent their getting too damp; and, in short, general arrangements were made for a removal. As the evening wore on, light after light was extinguished, and the show people retired to their respective waggons.

Life in a caravan may be all very well to such as the "Gentleman Gipsy;" but when the ways and means are not forthcoming the case is entirely different. Many persons, with a keen recollection of the good things provided by Mrs. Jarley for Little Nell, and of the tolerably comfortable life led by the famous proprietor of the original wax-works, are apt to consider the showman's life as essentially one of comfort, if not of comparative luxury. But an incident which happened as the last of the shows was clearing away, exemplifies in a striking manner the great, the essential difference between the Real and the Ideal.

The gentleman who owned the strike-indicating machine, who was also the proprietor of an electric battery and a small shooting-gallery, was the last to begin packing up, and, probably because the receipts were not satisfactory, he was not in the best of tempers. An unfortunate blunder on the part of his assistant—a poor, miserable-looking wretch of middle age, whose clothes, hat, and boots agreed only in that they were all extremely old and dilapidated—afforded a convenient excuse for getting rid of him, and thus decreasing the expenses.

Presently voices rose high, and head after head was popped out from adjoining waggons.

"Well, can I help the bad business!" the assistant said, thrusting his hands deeply into his pockets.

"I don't say you can," retorted the proprietor; "but what I do say is, that there ain't any life about you. You don't take any interest in your work."

"No, perhaps I don't——"

"Perhaps you don't! Of course you don't!" shrieked the proprietor's wife, thrusting the greater portion of her body over the small door of the waggon. "Why, many's the time I've taken near ten shillin' a day off the galvanic."

"But not on a day like this," said the assistant.

"Well," said the woman, in a still higher key, "you don't come in my waggon any more. If you durst put your foot on this step, I'll smash your face."

"Pay me what you owe me, then, and

"I'll go fast enough," said the man. "I've been with you nine weeks, and you haven't given me a penny."

"Does your food count for nothing?" shrieked the woman, again making a sudden dart over the door, as if she intended to spring upon the unfortunate assistant.

"Of course it does," said the man calmly; "but you promised me something."

"Yes, if business was good," put in the proprietor.

"And lately," proceeded the man, "it hasn't run to even half-a-pint of beer."

"Beer!" shrieked the proprietor's wife, making another convulsive dash at the doorway. "Beer! You've had too much beer in your time." Then she withdrew the greater portion of her body, and waited to see what effect this shot would have; but as the assistant appeared unmoved, she added, "That nose wasn't coloured for nothing!"

"Well, perhaps not," said the man. "But I ain't going to stand here all night."

"Don't you dare come in here," she said.

"You said you'd knock my face off, didn't you? And if you put your foot on my waggon, I'll knock yours off. If he" (pointing to the showman) "hits me, you're not going to!"

"Well, then, give me my money, and let me go!"

"I haven't got any," said the showman.

And so the wrangle went on for nearly an hour, by which time the assistant must have been drenched to the skin. At last he seemed to realise that it was impossible to get any money, so, taking off his hat, he shook some of the water from it, and, with the parting injunction that they would see him again somewhere, pulled it over his eyes, and soon disappeared in the darkness. Thereupon the heads disappeared, the woman withdrew muttering, and the showman, having ascertained that his dog was covered up, ascended the steps leading into the waggon, and carefully closed the door after him.

BEGGARS ABROAD.

BEGGARS at home and abroad may be roughly divided into cripples (including blind folk) and tramps. The first class explains itself; the latter has a long ancestry, and is what it is by virtue of heredity. I fancy the first tramp may have been a restless spirit in one of the Swiss lake-villages, who got tired of the

hut on piles and the perpetual plaiting of woollen plaids, and the shaping of flint arrow-heads, out of which only one in fifty would turn out shapely. Even firing the said arrow-heads into the sleeping bison or elk, and fishing through a hole in the ice, grew wearying after a time. The fact is, Binker—let us suppose that to have been his name—did not like cold; his skin was, by some accident, a little finer than those of his fellows, and was, therefore, over-sensitive to the chill damp and biting frost with just a few weeks of sunny weather—the "glacial period" had not long gone by. Besides, when he was quite a child, Binker had had a rare experience. His father took him out hunting; and he got lost up among the great snow mountains; and wandering on he found himself going down instead of up, and at every step the air grew warmer and the sun brighter. There were no mists; but every little pool was gay with butterflies come to drink, and in the bushes were big crickets of all colours—red and brown, pink and green with purple stripes. Binker was thinking how much finer they were than the birds that came round his village, when he was aware of a hand laid on him, and a dark-haired man, in a short white dress with purple stripes down the front, said something in an unknown tongue and began to hurry him away, giving him, at the same time, some food that he had never tasted before. Binker ate greedily, wondering if the dwellers above the sky had better fare than that. But, when the man tied him up in a wooden shed, and went off, apparently to tell his friends what he had caught, the boy thought it was time to go.

The Italian's knots were soon unfastened; and to swarm up one of the posts and wriggle out between the rafters, was the work of a few seconds. The food had given him strength; but he was nearly exhausted, when a trader of his own tribe, on his way back, picked him up, and carried him back to the village. But ever since Binker had been hankering after the brighter, warmer skies. Why should not he go among the flowers and the butterflies? He was strong enough now to give a good account of any dark-haired man in white who might try to capture him. And Meevis, too, would go with him; and Meevis's baby; and that would give him heart in crossing the long snow ridges between the pile-village and the sunny plain.

So Binker and Meevis, if they escaped the Italian slave-catchers, as in those early days they easily might, would found a wandering tribe, would become great-grandfather and mother of a race of tramps. They could not settle down if they would; in that old world, the "jus connubii" (right of intermarriage) and all other rights were very strictly limited, and strangers had exceedingly hard work to effect a footing except by force.

That word "force" opens up another view of the tramp question. Wherever law and society are weak, the tramp is strong; nay, sometimes pretty nearly master of the situation. It is so now in some parts of Turkey. The Kurd and Turcoman to the north, the Bedouin to the south, are each a glorified kind of gipsy. The former does a good deal in the way of horse, and occasionally man stealing. His daughters are often handsome; and then he sells them well into some Effendi's harem. Both he and the Turcoman and the Bedouin often hold rich traders and others to ransom.

What a poor creature is our tramp in comparison! He never had a chance. Even in the days of Ine, King of Wessex; even in the still earlier days of Hlothaire, King of Kent (A.D. 680), sharp repressive laws kept him very much in the background. The wide spaces of Lesser Asia, the supineness of Turkish governors, gave the tramp much freer scope, and developed him into quite a different being. Perhaps, too, there is something in race. The Saxon, or even the old Briton, preferred a settled life; only took to roving when there was nothing else for it: the profession of vagabond was always looked down upon.

Abraham was a tramp of this grander sort. He had his men-servants, and his maid-servants, and his camels; but the only difference between him and the king of the gipsies, or the "upright man" of the "Fraternity of Vacabondes" (see a curious tract by John Awdley, 1575), was that the latter, living under a strong Government, were held down; the former, having only very weak Governments (ropes of sand, like the cities of Canaan) to contend with, became a power—was able, for instance, to hold the balance in the war of the five kings against the four. Our Robin Hood might have grown into an Abraham if Ripon had been against Northallerton, and Wakefield against them both, and so on, each with its own kinglet always ready for a raid upon his neighbours, and therefore welcoming the help

which Robin and his merry men would gladly give—for a consideration. The nearest approach in Europe—since the days when the Huns swept over it as far as Central France, and the Slavish Polish Russian tribes of the Baltic used to make yearly raids into the heart of Germany—to the glorified tramp of Abraham's sort, was when the Free Companies hired themselves out to fight for the best paymaster. They never got a footing in England, though when Stephen was King we had a very similar plague. France, saddled with them during the agony of the Hundred Years' War, got rid of them pretty soon. But Italy was long their paradise, just because, in Italy, it was city against city, princelet against princelet; no central Government to do what even the weakest of the English kings was able to effect.

Well, Binker and Meevis, if they had waited till they became grandparents, and had then marched their whole clan down south, might have become a Free Company in a small way. Many a Tuscan Lucumo (chief of a city), many a tyrant (Prince) of a town in Sicily or Great Greece (South Italy) had his body-guard of Gauls, and would have welcomed the sturdy men of the lake-village. But they were too impatient, and, therefore, if they escaped the kidnapper, there was nothing for them but a tramp's life. There were many like them—Easterners of all kinds bringing strange arts of jugglery, and song, and dance. And, by the time the Roman Empire was tottering to its fall, the tramp system was as fully developed there as it is with us. Christianity did a deal to swell the ranks of wandering beggary. When the temples were closed for want of worshippers, a swarm of flute-players, chorus dancers, pantomimists, and what not were thrown on the world. What could they do, poor things, but take their voices, and their tumbling tricks, and their sword-swallowing, and all the diversions with which they had enlivened the great festivals, round to the outlying villages, the inhabitants of which—"pagani" means villagers*—often adhered openly, and almost universally in secret, to the old faith? By-and-by, these wanderers, who, as Christianity spread into

* Heathens were "dwellers on the heath," i.e. the wild Slavonic tribes—Wends, Letts, etc.—who swarmed over Germany, in the old time as conquerors, holding cities to ransom; but, when the Government grew strong, sinking more and more into tramps, differing from ours only in that they tramped in troops.

out-of-the-way corners, came to be looked on with disfavour as sorcerers, were recruited from the ranks of the nobles. Both in France and Germany, many a noble took up the profession of minstrel. At first, they only wrote and sang the words, leaving the instrumental part to the musical tramps, to whom probably we owe the folk-music, as distinguished from the Church music of the Middle Age. But, by-and-by, there was found to be such a charm in the life, and it so surely won favour with the ladies, that young men of rank and birth went in for it altogether. Walter of the Birdmead ("von den Vogelswiede"), followed to the grave by all the beauty and fashion of Franconia, shows that for a time the minstrel rose completely above the level of the tramp. But, of course, there would always be a residuum; and then, too, there were the maimed and diseased, whom it was a Christian duty to help, and whose comfortable life tempted a good many to sham sickness in order to get the same easy maintenance.

In Germany, where every body is classified and brigaded, the tramps were quite early formed into guilds. Luther wrote a preface to a "*Liber Vagatorum*" (Book of Tramps) which divides them into eight-and-twenty fraternities, amongst them the "*Kammesierers*" (poor scholars), whose Irish counterparts come in in so many of Carleton's tales, and who still exist in Eastern Europe; Dr. Vambéry, when a lad, was one of them.

There were also the "*Voppers*," demoniacs, who let themselves be led in chains as if raving mad; the merchants who have suffered shipwreck; the sham jaundiced; the sham noblemen who pretend to have been driven off their lands by the enemy, etc. These last remind one of a very insinuating beggar who is commoner at Vienna than elsewhere. He sends in his card, "*Count von Leertäsche*," or the "*Gräfin von Staub und Asche*." Before you have time to edge in a word, the Count or Countess has got half through an eloquent encomium on the English nation, the noblest, the most generous:

"Look at the history of the world, sir. Where do you find that England has been appealed to in vain; where does suffering exist without English people being eager to seek out and to relieve it?"

You are wondering if your visitor will end by soliciting a "*milde Gabe*" (small donation) for some charity, when you are suddenly aware that the sufferer is the Count or Countess in person, and that you are ex-

pected to behave worthily of the national character for generosity.

The workhouse in Vienna is a peculiar arrangement. For about twopence a night you may get a bed there and go out and work during the day; or, if you stay there altogether, you get, besides food and lodging, a small weekly wage. Vienna has its "*refuges*," in which every year over eighty thousand get a night's shelter and two meals of bread and soup. It has also its Anti-Mendicity Society, founded in 1879. Here, as elsewhere, vagrancy has increased.

A landowner in Lower Austria calculates that the amount given to tramps by a peasant exceeds the amount he pays in taxes.

In Germany, beggary has vastly increased since the war. Tramping, too, is easier since the abolition of the strict law of settlement, which made a pass necessary for everyone going outside his native territory.

The French milliards made the Germans fancy they had suddenly become fabulously rich. Everybody launched out; the most frugal nation in Europe became a nation of spendthrifts and speculators. New railways were planned in all directions; every third-rate town began to build grand suburbs. This drew thousands of labourers off the land; and when the bubble burst, and the nation realised the fact that the milliards were not in circulation at all, but locked up in the treasure-vaults at Berlin, these were thrown out of work and were obliged to go on tramp. Most of these tramps are literally homeless, having no place to which they are legally chargeable; and employers are very shy of keeping any of them long enough to give them a claim on the rates. No wonder, then, that German tramps are beginning to form packs, like the wolves. Such a pack will swoop down on a lonely village, while the men are away in the fields, and will extort money and food from the women, the solitary policeman looking hopelessly on.

If the village starts a pursuit and prosecutes, that means a good many extra pennings in the local rates; so they are allowed to pass on. Nay, some villages prefer paying blackmail, like the Isle of Man shopkeepers. Lodging, too, is seldom refused, lest, if the barn door is kept locked, the farmer "may see the red cock perch on his thatch."

These tramps have taken the place of the "workman in his wander-year," such a common sight on German roads a generation back

—brisk, neat, with his good boots hanging outside his knapsack—an apprentice out of his time travelling to finish himself, and to study his craft in other neighbourhoods. Instead, you now meet a ragged, ill-looking fellow, with cudgel instead of knapsack, and spirit-flask sticking out of his pocket.

At Wilhelmsdorf, in Westphalia, is a labour colony, where vagrants are fed, clothed, and kept at farm work till they have earned the cost of their clothing and got back their taste for habits of work. This usually takes three months. They are then sent off with something in their pocket to make their way to the most promising labour market. If they prove irreclaimable or refractory, they are handed over to the police instead of being discharged.

Wilhelmsdorf is a private venture, started by Pastor Bodelschwing, but it is clamouring for State help; the idea being to found a number more labour colonies, and to establish throughout the Empire a number of stations where bonâ fide wandering workers may, in return for a modicum of work, get food, clothing, and temporary shelter. These stations, it is hoped, will take the place of wayside inns—they supply beer, but no schnapps—and will also be registry and inquiry offices.

Despite the Imperial unity, every State retains some of its own methods of dealing with beggary. A Bavarian, for instance, never loses his "domicile" (right to relief), however long he may have been away from home.

In Hamburg, on the other hand, the laws against begging are nearly as stringent as in the old days, when the gatekeepers were bound not to let in "beggars, cripples, Jew pedlars, and such like."

All over Germany, every parish has its own land, partly arable and pasture, and partly wood; out of this the expenses are paid, and sometimes, where the roads are lined with cherry or apple trees, and the crop sells well, there is actually a surplus, and the rates for the year are nil.

What a boon this would be for England! In many of our counties you will find fifty villages one after another with not a square yard of land which is not possessed by some private owner. Every halfpenny that is wanted for poor, for roads, for anything, has to be raised out of the pockets of the parishioners. Sometimes the Squire owns it all; sometimes there are a lot of little freeholders—often the beer-shop keepers—whose cottages are worse than the Squire's and let at higher rents.

Labour-farms have long been tried in Holland. One does not usually think of Mynheer as kind to the poor. "Max Havelaar"—that very sad novel—describes him as hard enough in Java; and I remember in my earliest "French Reader" a story of how the Dutch dealt with lazy vagabonds: put them into a water-tight chamber and set a tap running overhead, so that the fellows must keep pumping, if they did not mean the water to rise and drown them.

But General Van den Bosch, at any rate, had his heart in the right place. He saw the misery of the Amsterdam beggars—worse in that chilly, damp climate than even in London. He felt that Mynheer's frugal alms might as well be flung into the Zuyder Zee as given in chance charity. He saw all those arms—many of them only needing good food to make them stalwart—and he knew the wide sweeps of heath, mere sandy wastes, in Groningen and Drenthe, which by tillage might be made as fertile as Flanders. So he founded the "Society of Beneficence," 1818, and began to buy land. Before he died he had ten thousand acres—at Fredericksoord, near Steenwyk; at Ommerschans, near Meppel; and at Veenhuizen, near Assen—under some sort of tillage.

The Government agreed to send all the beggars whom the police took up; the Society sent all whom its members privately got hold of; and so there was a grand conglomeration, in which the only want was a proper sorting of the various elements. Now that Government has taken the whole thing into its own hands, the vagrants are classified. Ommerschans is a "penal prison" for the incorrigibles and refractory; Veenhuizen is divided into three departments, one of which is for women; only Fredericksoord remains as a place of temporary employment for those who have fallen out of the ranks.

Here, they are employed as wood-cutters, cattle-tenders, field-labourers; and those who cannot do work of this kind make coffee bags, military gloves, mats, fishingnets, and knit stockings, and so on; so that from the General's "glorious failure" has come a system, which it seems we might follow with advantage—a sort of industrial school for grown people, which many think is the only way of dealing with tramps, weaning them from their trampish ways.

"Reformatories for grown people," that is what we at home want as well as the Dutch. You cannot reform everybody; but,

if only thirty per cent. of the present army of tramps and ne'er-do-weels are proved to be the victims of circumstances, and are saved, when, for a time—a sufficiently long time, remember—they are removed from those circumstances, why, it would “pay,” even in the narrowest sense of the word, to give the poor fellows a chance.

I have had a great experience of tramps. When I was first married, I lived in a lone house on a road between two Midland towns. The wave of wandering misery, which was set in motion by the Irish famine, had not yet died down. I had a “tramp’s patch,” which every able-bodied man who cared for work, might dig over for a shilling and a bowl of soup. I should think it was better dug than any bit of ground in the United Kingdom. I never found that tramp passed on word to tramp, or that I was afflicted with women and incapables. The reason of this exemption might be that, though a road, mine was not the high-road. Many a man I tried to get into employment; but in most the tramp spirit was too strong. A poor fellow (Irish) who could construe Cicero—I put him on in a hard place—and prove a proposition of Euclid on the gravel, was not likely to care for brewery work, our local industry. He had a receipt for ink-making, and very good his ink was, for I got him the materials, and he made me some; but I could not offer to set him up in a stationer’s shop. Would that I had had a Fredericksoord, for then he would not have come up as he did one morning, and say, “he thought he’d move on; was afraid he was doing no good; hoped he might meet with something to suit him in Derby or somewhere.”

No tramp ever stole anything; I wish I could say the same of all the labouring men who have been in my service. Two of them became valuable servants; one, who was begging with a half-blind daughter in his arms—workhouse ophthalmia, a veritable plague to the Irish who were packed into close rooms, after being used to the free air of moor or bog—was with me for years, till a son, who was, when I met the father, a small boy in an iron-foundry, had grown and thriven enough to make the old man a home. He was so trusty that, when we went away to the seaside, and had some of my fruit sent after us, he watched, like the dragon of the Hesperides, and saw that we got the choicest kinds. There was a cherry of which my servants and children were

equally fond. When we got back, cook and housemaid complained to nurse that they had not even tasted this particular fruit. “John,” they said, “was very nasty about they cherries. He would pack them all up and send to master.” Yes, John Rice was a success—a Protestant of the old stock, a Welshman by descent, in his own idea at least.

The other, James Daly, a little Roscommon man, was as good as gold, barrin’ the drink, which he was too fond of letting get the mastery over him. Here is an instance: One Sunday morning I was walking round, babe in arms, to look at the live stock, when lo! the most important part, the pigs were missing. James knew nothing about them; they were there safe enough when he fed them the evening before. He looked so dazed that I sent him for the parish constable, who lived a stone’s throw off, and who, a pompous man, stalked in, looked at the perfectly clean sty, glanced contemptuously down on little “Pat,” and, turning up still higher the tip of his “tip-tilted nose,” he said solemnly: “I tell you what, sir, I suspect the H Irishman and ’is haccomplishes.” At that moment, there was a loud “weet, weet,” from the saddle-room opposite; and opening, we found the pigs there. “Pat” had put them in while he gave the sty a thorough cleaning, and then (going off to supper) had forgotten them altogether. “Pat” went away to a brother at New Orleans, having received from me, in default of a priest (the “League of the Cross” was not in those days), a Temperance pledge. I dressed up in canonicals, took his hands in mine, as he knelt, and made him solemnly vow against more than one pint of beer daily. He nearly brought the whole proceedings to an untimely end by suggesting, after I had said, “beer,” “Small beer, your honour.” Tramps, therefore, in my experience, are not all bad. No doubt, for some years after the Irish famine the vagabond ranks were swelled by many really honest workers, unable to stand against the misery of the time. I can only repeat, that such is my experience; very different from that of the Northern farmer who pronounced that “the poor in a lump is bad.”

Of “tramps abroad,” there is not much more to say. In Sweden the system is something like the Dutch adult reformatories; only instead of improving barren heaths, the vagrants, when caught, or when

they come voluntarily, are set to cut out and shape the granite blocks which are Sweden's most important product.

Italy, the home of Mother Church, was naturally the paradise of beggars. Up to 1870, forty were licensed by the Cardinal Vicar—half of them blind, the rest cripples, about a third being women—to stand at church doors during the solemnity of the "Forty Hours," so that people who came to pray had to run the gauntlet of a double row of noisy mendicants. Licenses to beg are still given; but the law is now very severe on those begging without a license.

Of old there were even more begging guilds in Italy than in Germany: among them the "Cozeners" (Felsi), who claimed the gift of prophecy, and said that they could guide people to hidden treasures guarded by evil spirits, whom they (the Felsi) could put to flight by their fastings; the Affrati (false monks), who celebrated mass—of course for the sake of the offertory—though they had never been ordained; the Falsi Bordoni (false pilgrims), who "were under a vow not to live on anything but alms while on pilgrimage"; the Appetenzzi (bread eaters), "under a vow to eat nothing else;" they sold the whole loaves given to them. There were also Jucchi (Jews), who pretended to have been converted by a vision or miracle; these got themselves rebaptized in every town, so as to attract gifts from their sponsors and admirers generally. Indeed, out of more than thirty species described by a Dominican in a treatise called "Il Vagabondo," all but three are sham religionists of one kind or other.

The old charms, which are not quite out of use in England, are still in high favour in Italy. Sometimes they are very unedifying.

In Russia, begging is increased by the fact that sometimes, while the crops in some parts are good, they are almost nil in others; hence a continual moving to and fro among a population which has very little reserve against hard times.

In Portugal, the traveller is horrified with roadside monstrosities more sickening even than those which he meets in China.

In Turkey, besides the "valiant beggars" of the Turcoman or Bedouin sort in the remote provinces, there are everywhere the begging Dervishes and other professionals. Greeks, as well as Turks, think it lucky to give; and, if you mean to give away a piastre, break it up into paras, and give one apiece to your beggars; you will

thus get the greatest amount of good out of the gift. In Turkish towns naked beggars are a great nuisance; in Pera one scoundrel used to go into European shops frequented by ladies, and stay till he was bribed off. At last an English shopkeeper arranged with his neighbours, that next time he came they should fall on him and thrash him with yard-measures. He has not been seen in the European quarter from that day to this. In Turkey, there is a vast amount of property—the *Imarets*—bequeathed for the poor; but, like other Turkish institutions, it is shamefully jobbed. The Koran insists on almsgiving, but gives it a wide interpretation. Thus, "doing justice between two is alms; helping a man on to his beast is alms; good words are alms; your smiling in your brother's face is alms." Begging, however, finds no countenance in the Mussulman's Bible: "A man who begs is like one who scratches his own face. He, who goes on begging, will appear in the Judgement with no flesh on his face."

In the old Irish—Brehon—law, there are rules about wayfarers, to whom every one was bound to supply a meal to help them on their way, except Kings and Abbots.

French beggars would fill a paper to themselves. They had their quarter in Paris, the "Cours des Miracles"; and their guilds, including sham sufferers by fire; sham broken-down merchants; sham disbanded soldiers, who asked alms with swords by their sides. Near of kin to these were the girl-stealers, who lived by selling their victims. Both Louis the Thirteenth and Louis the Fourteenth opened asylums for beggars, finding penal measures fail. Occasionally a haul was made, and a batch sent off to Canada or Acadia.

Now, the French tramps are sharply looked after by the Prefects; but they thrive nevertheless; as do the gipsies, though they are, in many parts, believed to be German spies; just as in Elizabeth's reign, in East Anglia, they were hanged by dozens, because some J.P.s professed to believe that seminary priests adopted the gipsy life. In France it is patriotism that makes the gipsy hated; in East Anglia, it was greed working on the fears of the people. Land-grabbers, like Sir Bassingbourne Gawdy, had got hold of many Roman Catholics' estates, and they were determined to keep what they had got, and therefore taught the people to see Jesuits everywhere, even among the Romany Rye.

POOR FOLK.

A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

By the Author of "*David Ward*," "*The Story of a Sorrow*," "*A Dreadful Mesalliance*," etc. etc.

CHAPTER V.

IT was a lovely country. Gordon was quite sure of that, after a time. Melbourne had been disappointing as being not so very unlike London, and the gold-fields, after his brilliant visions, were a nightmare; but the country itself, as Gordon saw it from the top of the stage-coach which took them from Bendigo and the gold-fields to the banks of the Goulburn, where Taylor's farm lay, was a revelation to the little city boy. Never had he dreamed of air so pure, a sky so blue, or winds so soft and sweet. And then the clouds, flecks of opal and silver against the azure background, or great mountains of alabaster, tinged with hues of precious stones, piled up on the horizon!

"Oh, what a lovely world!" he cried often, amusing his fellow travellers, and Taylor most of all. There are people in whom the love of Nature is a passion; people to whom rustic sights, and scents, and sounds are a joy unutterable. Gordon was one of these, while to Taylor Nature had no voice nor suggestiveness. With him, spring was the season of sowing, and autumn of mowing, and a clear sky meant fair weather, or, if too prolonged, drought; and clouds meant rain, or possibly a hurricane, and that was about all; but he was glad to see that his protégé was pleased.

The stage-coach stopped within twenty miles of Taylor's home, and the remainder of the journey had to be made by a private conveyance chartered for the purpose. It was not till years afterwards that Gordon understood how much their digression towards the gold-fields, from the straight road leading to Wonga Farm, had cost his patron; quite as much, at least, as would have paid the return journey of one of them to London.

The vehicle Taylor hired, where the stage-coach deposited them, was a bullock cart, and as they advanced slowly over a road traced anyhow through the bush, the farmer could not help reflecting, as he looked silently around him, how heroic a heart he must have had to settle in the bush at the first. Now everything was different; his land was all under cultivation and fertile, his stock was valuable, and there was a comfortable deposit of money in the Victoria Bank, but what toil it had all cost in the past!

"My land was a good deal like that when I settled on it," he said, indicating the forest to either hand, where the gum-trees and messmate, thick as they could stand, were interlaced at their base with an impenetrable scrub, high as a man on horse-back, and so solid that a dog could not have crept through it. "Now I have clean fields, and good fences, and a roomy house, but they cost me a long price."

Gordon was all eagerness and attention, all curiosity to learn.

"What did you do? How did you do it?"

Taylor shook his head.

"I don't think I could tell you now if I tried, and I question if it was worth the terrible toil I gave to it. But there is no good in beginning to be wise so late in the day. I can live, and comfortably, where the kangaroo and opossum used to have a high old time; and that is something done for the colony as well as for myself."

Taylor never entered into the particulars of his own history to Gordon, or anyone; but the boy grew to believe in after years that home affections had been forgotten in the race for wealth, and that when these were remembered and desired they had grown cold.

To settle in the Bush a man must have the heart of a lion and the sinews of a giant, for the Bush does not mean patches of wood interspersed with fertile tracts, but acres of dense timber and scrub; and before a plough can be put into the earth, every foot of this must be destroyed.

To dispose of the trees is not so difficult. They are first ringed, that is, deprived of a circle of bark, so that they die; then the dead timber is burned. The chief trouble is with the scrub, as it must be cut down and consumed time after time. Often it requires four successive cuttings before it is destroyed; and if the settler grubs the land so as to have straight furrows, he will not be able to redeem more than four acres in a year, and that by unceasing toil; and all this time his capital is melting, while he subsists on a crust.

But there was no suggestion of past slavery and privation in the comfortable homestead which met the view as Taylor and Gordon arrived at Wonga Farm. Two farm-labourers, who had seen the cart approach in the distance, had come rushing up to welcome the master, and a collie dog, handsomest of his species, darted out to offer his joyous greeting.

Taylor was a little moved. In spite of his

reserve. This was home. He shook hands with the men warmly, patted the sheep-dog kindly, and then he introduced Gordon.

"I have brought you a new chum," he said, and to the latter, "welcome home, lad!"

Gordon was enchanted with all he saw. The place was so clean, so spacious, so peaceful, the rough, abundant supper most tempting to his keen appetite, the new companions kindly if undemonstrative.

These were called Smith and Jenkins, and were a kind of overseers over later arrivals on the farm, including black fellows and other temporary assistants. They had both been about the same length of time at Wonga, were equally attached to their employer, and had jealousy of each other as their main passion; but as this induced greater assiduity in their labour, probably Taylor was at no special pains to allay it.

At the first Smith and Jenkins believed that Gordon was a young relative, whom master had brought from home, and were proportionately amiable. When they discovered that, in spite of his soft accent and bright, quick London ways, he had been just a little stowaway whom master chose to favour, they were disgusted. They had come honestly to the colony, had paid their way and not stolen a passage, yet master had never taken to petting them. Over this grievance the foes made common cause on the very night of the lad's arrival, while he, in blissful unconsciousness, had curled himself up on his hard stretcher, and was dreaming of home.

But fatigue, or the novelty of his situation, rendered him wakeful, and before the rising sun had flung one herald ray into the west, the boy was wide awake and thinking. And then suddenly his enthusiasm for his new home became a delirium, because, for the first time in his life, he heard the music of the Australian woods.

First, the cold air seemed to thrill a little; then a faint fragrance became discernible from earth and bush. "Sweet," ventured a small bird, tentatively; "jug, jug," another answered back, with the note of an English nightingale; and then there was a shiver of wings, and a quiver of leaves, and the whole wood seemed hesitatingly to awake. But it was not till a thin red streak crept into the sky, that the woods rang with music sweet and shrill, grotesque and merry. First there were the honey-sweet notes of the thrush; then the harsh "ha, ha," of the laughing jack-ass; then the unintelligible, but perfectly

articulate chattering of the leatherheads, and the screaming of the magpies, and the piping of the crows. Gordon had never fancied anything like it; there seemed to be ten thousand voices, and each had half-a-dozen songs, and these were interspersed with all discords, the barking of a dog, the creaking of machinery, the voices of men mingled with imitations of half the instruments in an orchestra; and above it all, inextinguishable laughter, as though Nature had gone mad with the rising of the sun. At first Gordon had laughed; the rollicking jollity of the birds, their extravagances of drollery, their side-splitting fun were too much for him; but after a time, by some unintelligible association of ideas, he thought of home and fell to weeping, while the woods rang with peals of mirth.

It was woman's work Gordon was put to at the first. On the passage he had shown an aptitude for it, and woman's work was rare and highly valued on the farm. He could cook a little, and he soon learned to cook more; and he could sew—not only stitch on buttons and darn, but fix a patch adroitly. He understood about washing, too, and acquitted himself therein perfectly, as the farm-people deemed perfection.

"He is as good as a woman," Taylor said approvingly.

"He is no better than a woman," Smith and Jenkins answered surlily. Jealous as these worthies had formerly been of each other, they were now so much more jealous of Gordon, that they would have given their ears—one apiece, at any rate—to have discovered him in some grave misdoing. But they could not do so, nor even in a minor peccadillo, and that not because Gordon was an impossibly perfect creature, but because he was so happy in the new life he led, so inspired by the atmosphere he breathed, as to be ready and willing for anything. They could not tire him, even with tasks beyond his seeming strength, allotted slyly when master was out of the way, nor discover that his zeal in Taylor's service was feigned.

"You don't look up to much," Smith admitted sometimes, in spite of himself, "but you are a tough one to work."

Well, why should he not be tough? Had anyone ever been as kind to him as Taylor? And then there was the other recompense of those beautiful shillings paid to him weekly, till their sum assumed such dimensions that the boy grew afraid that the very birds would whisper of his wealth, and an enemy come to rob him.

"Keep it," he said one day, bringing his little hoard to Taylor; "I don't know what to do with it."

"How long shall I keep it?" the other asked, with a faint twinkle in his clear eyes.

"Till I come to ask for it. I think I shall want it some day."

Gordon was very happy; but as the weeks passed and grew into months a sorrow crept into his heart and took root there. He had written home immediately on his arrival at Wonga Farm; had told of his well-being and of the friend he had found, and had implored Mrs. Rayne, if she was not displeased with him for what he had done, to write to him soon.

The post-office nearest to the farm was eight miles off; but as often as Gordon knew that an English mail had arrived he rode to the office when his day's work was over, despite the direst fatigue.

He had learned accurately the time necessary for the transmission of a letter and for a reply, and until that time had elapsed he was perfectly patient; but when mail succeeded mail without bringing him any message, he grew sick at heart.

Could she be displeased with him for the manner of his leaving; did she fancy him ungrateful; or was she learning to forget him?

After half-a-dozen months of doubt he wrote again, telling her of all his affection, of all his gratitude, of the need he had to hear from her; but the same dead silence answered that also.

"When I am rich I shall go back and tell her everything, and ask her to explain," he said to himself, and that resolve comforted him somewhat.

He was not homesick; for home, whether it meant London or Bloater's Rents, had no attraction for him; but he was mother-sick.

That she was angry enough with him to be able to persist in her cold silence, he could not believe. In all his life she had never been stern with him; but then why did she not write to him—she who had personal experience of the cruelty of silence?

"Perhaps she does not live at Bloater's Rents now, and so never gets my letters," he suggested once tentatively to Taylor.

"In that case they would come back to you."

"Then do you think she gets them and does not care?"

"I can't say. She is a woman, you know, and I don't pretend to understand women."

"If I thought she got the letters, I should like to send her some money."

"You can try her with a trifle, at any rate. It may bring an acknowledgement, and, if not, you can't help it."

But Gordon's little remittance shared the fate of his former communications.

Taylor was very sorry for the boy. He liked him sufficiently to understand all he felt; but he consoled himself with the reflection that the sorrows of youth are not eternal. As to Mrs. Rayne, he concluded that she must be a high-tempered old dame, and was glad that he had not carried into effect a previous idea of inviting her out to exercise her varied accomplishments at Wonga Farm.

Certainly she had trained the boy well, had made him honest, industrious, and wonderfully clever in a hundred ways; but Taylor was aware that the excellences of parents and children are sometimes in inverse ratio.

As far as his own individual interest in the matter was concerned, he was rather glad that Gordon felt himself cut off from old associations, as that led him to bind himself more closely with the interests and satisfactions of the present. If anything he could have done would have brought the boy a letter from home, he would have been at any pains to do it; but when the thing was entirely beyond his province, he took philosophical views regarding it.

Taylor was very fond of Gordon; but for all that he made no attempt to molly-coddle the boy, or to surround him with moral cotton-wool. He saw that Smith and Jenkins were fitfully tyrannous towards him, and did not interfere. This also, as not being a personal matter, he was able to consider in the abstract.

"Even good men will not be always just till the Millennium," he told himself, and let their spite work its way within certain limits.

Taylor knew all the good points in Smith and Jenkins; knew that they were interested in his welfare, proud of the farm and the stock, watchful of all traces of disease in sheep or cattle, and indefatigable when danger threatened crop or animals. If, then, they were sulky with each other occasionally in slack times, or sharp with Gordon habitually, the master winked at it.

Gordon bore it very well. He was clever enough to know that there were many ways in which he might have vexed and thwarted the men; but he never took advantage of them, never spoiled their

favourite dishes, nor delayed their meals when they were hungry and in haste; even went out of his way to please them. And in reluctant fashion they recognised this, though they never told him so, holding the not infrequent opinion that it spoils young people to praise them.

But Gordon's time was coming. It was about four years from his arrival at Wonga Farm, and he was grown a big fellow, lanky and yellow too, from the fierce Australian sun, but good-looking for all that, and as active, from a period anterior to the dawn, even in the longest days, as a healthy and willing-minded youth can be.

Gordon's habit of early rising was, in the eyes of his fellow-servants, the most troublesome and unaccountable habit he possessed. To tired labourers, an extra hour's rest is a great treat, and its loss a great privation, but since Gordon would be all over the place before daybreak, of course Smith and Jenkins must rise too. Indeed, at first they had suspected him of some nefarious design, and considered him well worth watching; when they thought better of this, and even came the length of believing that there might be some truth in his crazy assertion of rising to hear the birds sing, they could not go back on the habit they had begun of rising with him.

Taylor did not know of this practice for a time. When he learned of its existence and the cause for it, he had Gordon's stretcher carried out of the room, which hitherto he had shared with Jenkins and Smith, and placed in the granary. There he could keep the window open, and hear the birds at his leisure.

The music of the woods was a message to him. Of all things he had found in the new country, it differed most from all he had left, and recalled his baby dreams, dreamed years before at father's knee.

They did not sing, the Australian birds, they talked, or hummed, or chanted like skilled musicians, laughing, crowing, calling, or splitting their sides with fun, and not understanding how anyone could be dense enough not to see with them what a merry world it was.

There was not a note or syllable of their utterances that Gordon did not feel, and often, with his arms beneath his head and his eyes shut, he lay in his empty granary, listening to it all, as it poured like a river of melody into his ears, and over his heart.

It was four years from his landing, and

Taylor's settlement had become home to him, though a home that never forbade loving backward glances to the home he had left.

It was February, sultriest month in the Australian year, month abundant in hot winds, and the stinging showers of sand that they bear with them; and although it was morning so early that it might be called late night, Gordon was awake. None of his feathered friends had called to him, it was still before their hour, and not a sound of any kind was audible in the silence. Yet he had become broad awake in an instant, he did not know why.

"It is the heat or the mosquitoes," he thought, as he rose and approached the unglazed granary window.

Pitch darkness everywhere, as far as the eye could reach, except for a crimson glow at one place in the sky.

"Dawn," Gordon said to himself briefly, then paused. This light was in the east, and he remembered that, in topsy-turvy land, the sun rose in the west.

But if not dawn, what was it? His heart quickened its pulsations; his breath came rapidly. Drawing on his clothes instantly he sped, barefooted, to Taylor's sleeping-room.

"Master," he cried hurriedly, tapping at the window-pane; "master."

"Yes," after a pause.

"There is a red light in the sky; will you get up and look at it?"

Despite the sultriness of the night, he was trembling.

Taylor came to the window, and pushed it open. Then he uttered a cry. "Call everyone," he said shrilly, "and get out the horses and ploughs. The Bush is on fire; Heaven help us to save our lives and the homestead!"

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UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN the autumn of that same year the Bank permitted John Temple to take his annual holiday. Four days were already snipped from its meagre proportions, and he was thinking of two of those days as he walked home on the evening of his release. Both of them had been spent with Tilly, and they seemed to be divided in their brightness by a chasm of years from the dreariness of the present.

It is by events, rather than by hours and moments, that time should count, and the events had come so thick in the first months of the summer that they seemed to have spent themselves, and to have left behind nothing but a shabby distaste for the life they had despoiled. The monotony of his new solitude had the effect of making everything look very far off. His uncle's death might have happened a generation ago, so completely had it been accepted by the few acquaintances he had made.

They all knew now that he had, unknowingly, carried the death-warrant about with him for years, and some of them were even ready to assert that they had recognised him for a doomed man from the first. As for Tilly's sorrow, they bore that very well, too; and it was left for him, and perhaps one or two other kindly hearts, to grieve for her grief.

The remaining days which he had stolen from his work had been mostly spent in journeying to and from Scotland, where he had gone to stand by his uncle's grave. A

pitiless, cold rain fell unceasingly, and the hills, which are the chief boast of the upland village, hid themselves behind a sullen fringe of mist. The austere, rugged simplicity of the funeral service struck cold to his heart, and he found himself glad that the custom of the land forbade Tilly any share in it.

He walked from the churchyard to the Manse with her elderly cousin, and accepted his undemonstrative hospitality for what was left of the day; but his hope of seeing Tilly was disappointed. They had told her of his presence in the house; but his name had not, as they hoped, roused her from the dull stupor in which she had remained since her uncle's death, and she expressed no wish to see him.

He took the night train back to town, and since then he had only had tidings of her twice—once in a bald and formal note from the minister, which told him nothing; and once again in a few lines from herself, which seemed to tell him even less than nothing.

Since then his life had suffered a further impoverishment by the death of his sister Jessie. It was but four weeks since her passionate, stormy heart had throbbed itself to rest; but that, too, seemed as if it belonged to a long time ago, and his present loneliness seemed the only unchanging and unchangeable fact of which he had full recognition.

He had taken a lodging in one of the modest little streets that are to be found in the by-ways of South Kensington; and, with Tilly so strongly in his thoughts, he had half unconsciously, in going home, made a détour by Prince's Gate, where her feet had so often strayed. It was a mellow September evening, with the softness of

luminant sky, in which the last glories of the sunset went hand-in-hand with the opening march of the stars.

It was such an evening as one is loth to draw a curtain from view, and even Mrs. Popham had withheld the illumination she owed. As he was passing her door it was opened from within, and his cousin came out.

John, perhaps, if left to himself, would have gone by without recognition; but Fred frustrated that half-formed intention by standing in front of him.

"Well," he said, and there was the old mockery without the old lightness in his voice, "we are met here again. Have you still the same burning desire to be introduced to Mrs. Popham?"

"No," said John, "I have not."

"I could easily gratify it now."

"I have no wish to know her."

"I thought, perhaps, you had arrived on purpose to congratulate me. You timed yourself well," said Fred, with a laugh which was without any pretence at mirth.

"To—congratulate you?"

"You are not very ready with your words," said Fred mockingly, "but then you were always slow. Shall I help you? I am about to marry a lady who might be my mother, and whom I don't pretend to adore. I am going to marry her because she has a great deal of money, and I have none at all and don't find life very agreeable without it. That's your case; we'll skip the sermon and the lessons you would draw so admirably, dear cousin, and we'll come to my case."

"No," said John, in a voice of command, "we'll pull up there. You've drawn up a pretty ugly bill against yourself, Heaven knows, and I daresay there's just about the half of it true."

"It is all true, I assure you. If you doubt my word, Mrs. Popham will be charmed to confirm it. We've just drawn up the articles of agreement, and I daresay she is at this moment writing orders for the trousseau."

"Fred," said John very gravely, laying a hand on his cousin's shoulder, "do not do this. If you want a home you can share mine, but to marry a woman, whom you neither love nor respect, for the sake of what she has—"

"I told you you might skip the sermon," said Fred. "You are highly moral, but unconvincing. You ought to look at the matter philosophically. Mrs. Popham's latest fancy is for a young husband, and

my latest necessity is the departed Mr. Popham's hoards. It's a fair bargain. To what do you object?"

"I object to your abominable cynicism. I should heartily despise you, if I did not as heartily pity you."

"Thank you," said Fred; and then he added, with concentrated bitterness: "You ought rather to thank me on your knees for the splendid chance I'm giving you to illustrate your own disinterestedness against the background of my iniquities. You can go down to Scotland without fear that your motives will be suspected; you were never tortured by the old man's brutality, while you were compelled to accept his favours. I believe you even liked him." He paused to give room for his amazement. "She is poor now. You, who have never known anything but a grovelling lot, or aspired to a better, can take her poverty and add it to your own, and never know the difference. She will believe in you."

"How dare you!" cried John, "How dare you settle things for her in this fashion! You!— It is dishonouring to her—she who—"

He broke off precipitately, unable to put the chaos of his thoughts into words.

Fred looked at him with a gleam of melancholy that shot across his bitter contempt.

"You fool! Oh, you fool!" he said. "It was you she loved all the time."

John Temple took his homeward way as one who dreams. He paused in blank unconsciousness once or twice, to the amazement of passers-by, as if to stay and control the rush and mad whirl of his thoughts. As yet it was hardly so much joy as an astounding wonder that he suffered. That she, who had been the one love of his life, should care for him; it was not possible. And yet the wonder and the hope grew together, and the hope combated the doubt, and now it seemed to vanquish, and now to suffer defeat. For a moment, his pulses throbbed with a triumphant certainty that brought the blood up into his face; the next, a cold unbelief blew like an icy breath across his gladness and chilled its presumptuous dreams.

Could Fred have spoken, but to mock and delude him?

John's sincere, straightforward nature refused to entertain this suggestion. "I never did the fellow a wrong," he said, with the simplicity that always awoke Fred's amused scorn.

Fred's words had been spoken under the compulsion of a feeling stronger than his will, and possibly in answer to a tardy impulse towards atonement; he was not without a certain acuteness of moral vision, and the fact that he had behaved like a dastard did not prevent him from knowing it, and suffering from the knowledge. His scorn, which embraced mankind, had its root in scorn of self.

John's strong common-sense came in the end to his rescue; it occurred to him in an illuminating flash, that the easiest solution of his doubts lay in a journey to the North, and a sight of Tilly. He told himself that he had but to see her, but to look into her candid eyes to know whether to speak or to bind himself to unbroken silence; and having once made up his mind to this test, he was in a fever to put it into execution. He rushed to his lodgings, and tremulously thrust a few necessaries into a bag. There was still ample time to catch the night-mail, and the remnant of his holiday gave him the coveted opportunity; he had no holiday plans to disarrange, and, having paid his week's score, he set out in a hansom for the station. When he got there he found that his ardour had left him a spare sixty minutes to while away before the time of starting; but that, and the succeeding hours of the night, went by in a waking dream, in which he spoke to Tilly, and read the answer he longed for in her eyes.

He went again and again over all the incidents of their short life together; he remembered her unswerving loyalty to her uncle and the simplicity with which she had accepted his limitations, and he honoured her as much as he loved her. It comforted him in some measure to know that she was poor; her wealth would have added overwhelmingly to the difficulties of his confession; but her poverty gave him a plea, since to work for her and to shelter her with his strong arm was the deepest desire of his heart. He had not thought of her in this light before: he had heard, indeed, of the failure of the company in which Mr. Burton had a large stake; but his uncle's wealth had always presented itself to his imagination as a boundless store which could not be easily drained. Fred, no doubt, spoke from larger information; John's life outside the Bank had been bounded of late by the walls of Jessie's sick-room; but Fred was much in the world, and had a receptive ear for its rumours. He never doubted that Fred must know.

It was, then, with this preconceived idea of Tilly as no longer an heiress, but poor—perhaps as poor as he—that he reached her early home.

The hills, as he drove across them in the dog-cart he was able to hire at the station, wore their royal tapestry of autumn purple. The air had none of the July mildness of the South, and was sharp and pungent with a subtle thymy odour which he inhaled with delight: the defiant cry of a moor-bird, as it swept disdainfully across the heather, seemed the voice of his own exultation. It added to the charm that he somehow seemed to have seen, and heard, and experienced it all before in some vague indefinable past. Perhaps it was inherited memory: it pleased him at least to believe it so. He was in the land of his forefathers, and he no longer felt, as he had felt four months ago, that he was an alien in the early home. He was at one with the people and the place, and, as he alighted at the inn, the thought seemed to give him a new rush of courage.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A DECLARATION of love—especially when it is not spontaneous, but premeditated—requires a certain screwing-up of courage even on the part of the bravest; and, when it comes to walking to the home of your beloved, presenting your card, and requesting an interview, the thing has a raw-boned look that robs it of a good deal of romance.

John Temple, however, was not the man to be turned from his purpose because he had to face some unpleasantness in its execution. If Cousin Spencer, for instance, chose to ask him his business, the explanation might be awkward; then he reflected that his first and chief business was to see Tilly, and the minister, though he was rather an arid and unsympathetic person, could have no reasonable objection to one cousin calling upon another.

He fortified himself with a good meal, and set out on his errand.

On his way to the Manse, which lay on the fringe of the village, he used his eyes to good purpose, looking into the little shops, and the curious dark-browed entries which led off from the main street to meaner streets behind, first hoping that he might see her emerge from one or other of them, and then, after each fresh disappointment, assuring himself that it would be much better that their greeting should take place in a quieter spot.

A stranger was a somewhat rare spectacle in the village, which had few attractions to allure summer guests, and report had already been busy about this one, so that looks of varying interest followed him as he went. That he was bound for the Manse could not be doubted, since the road he followed led to no other place where a man of his degree would care to halt, and it was matter of common consent that he had come to see the minister's cousin. The village had, indeed, expected quite a troop of young men to flock down from town in pursuit of the minister's guest, and in its disappointment it was a little inclined to expend the criticism that should have been spread over many upon this one tardy comer. If John had guessed this, he would have had greater reason to be thankful that he did not meet Tilly till there were no eyes to witness their recognition of each other.

Fate had indeed been preparing very kindly for him, for, when he reached the Manse gate, he saw at once that she was alone in the garden.

The Manse garden was a symmetrical square, wrested from the hill-slope and enclosed on all sides by a stone dyke. It was a republic, on the very latest pattern, in which the useful vegetable and the ornamental flower shared the soil impartially; but the exposed upward slope and the poorness of the land discouraged any lavish growth, and the trees being now swept clean of their leaves there was nothing to hide Tilly from his gaze.

She was a good way off from him, and her face was turned up towards the hill that rose above the garden. It was a green hill, and the sheep were cropping it; but its high shoulder wore a purple hood of new-blown heather, and to that her gaze seemed directed. He folded his arms on the wooden gate, and thought it no dishonour to pause and look at her awhile. He had been hungry for a sight of her, and now that he saw her, he thought that words might wait a little.

He could not read her expression; but her attitude, which bespoke a listless, weary indifference—the hanging hands, the gaze that seemed to see nothing visible, the rudeness of her surroundings, even the sweep of her black dress—all spoke to him of the sad heirship of sorrow to which she had awakened.

When he had troubled himself awhile over her, and burned anew in love and longing, he took an easy stride over the

little gate, fearing to startle her if he clicked the latch. He skirted his way by a rough patch of grass, and, having by this subterfuge lessened the distance between them to a yard or so, he allowed his foot to crunch the ground.

She turned slowly, expecting to see 'Lisbeth. For a moment her face had a blank, quiet unrecognition in it, and he could see how thin and how sad it was; then a quivering emotion broke over it, and with a cry she started forward.

He had not been very clear as to what he meant to say, though he had rehearsed many speeches. Whatever it might have been it was never said, for with his arms round Tilly, and her head buried on his breast, and her frame shaken with long, heaving sobs, a formal statement of his intentions and sentiments would have been quite preposterous; and if he could have made it, he would have deserved to be rejected with scorn. But rapturous words of love and soothing did not seem ridiculous; to have her clinging to him was sweeter than any answer he had dared to hope for.

"I thought I was forsaken," she sobbed at last, "and I was so lonely, so lonely. And all my life seemed at an end."

"You missed me and wished for me!" he asked, amazed and humbled before the greatness of his fortune, and hotly self-reproachful that she should have had a moment's ache on his account.

"I missed you," she said. "You belonged to the happiest and saddest bit of my life, and there was no one else who could understand so well. Ah," she lifted her head to look at him with pride in her dim eyes, "you were good to him: you were patient with him when he did not understand—when he turned from you. I shall always thank you in my heart for that."

"That was nothing—nothing," he said, almost shocked by her praise. "It was easy to see it was a mistake. My only regret is that the chance was denied me of clearing myself in his eyes."

"But it was not," she said eagerly; and then she told him of their talk on that rare holiday afternoon when he had bade her tell John of his wish for reconciliation. If unconsciously she gave the message a warmth it had not worn, who can blame her? Or who would rob her of her assured belief that in the world to which Uncle Bob had gone, everything had been made plain and clear to him?

"I am glad"—he drew a deep breath. "I am very glad of that, for now I feel that if he had been with us still, he would not have been so unwilling to trust you to me."

"It will please him," said Tilly, with a simple conviction that he received reverently, loving her the more for it.

At length it occurred to John that he had not said any of the things it had seemed so important to say.

They were walking up and down, quite regardless of the wonder which had drawn the minister to his study window, and sent 'Lisbeth to crane her neck from the garret the better to criticise the situation.

He had an arm about her waist, and her hand was locked in his as they slowly paced up and down, talking of the past with side glances now and then towards the future.

"We shall be very poor," he said soberly. "My darling, when I think of all you had, of all you were, my heart misgives me. If you should ever miss the things that another, a richer man, might have given you; but for my selfish longings——"

"I shall miss nothing. Shall we be so very poor?" she asked, given him a side-long glance.

"I'm afraid I can never hope for a brilliant lot. There are very few prizes in my business, and none of them will fall to me. I was offered by our chief the other day the managership of a new branch we are opening in the City; I suppose the salary would only run to three hundred pounds at the outside."

"I could live on three hundred, or two hundred, or one hundred," she said cheerfully, "if there were any occasion. But I don't know that there is."

"I'm afraid I can't count on any more," he said sorrowfully.

"But suppose I could count on having something of my own to give you? Do you remember coming to me one night at the Claverings to warn me about a company Mr. Behrens was interested in?"

"I remember very well; and I know, too, that it came to grief. Your uncle was a director and the largest shareholder."

"But," she said gently, "it was proved that my uncle never gave his consent to becoming a director, and never made application for shares, though he fully meant to do it."

"Then the money was not lost?"

She shook her head.

"And his other investments?"

"Nothing was lost: nothing but his life.

Death was too quick for Mr. Behrens. Oh," she said with sudden pathos, "how gladly I would have given him everything if I could have my uncle now!"

He held her closer, but he was troubled.

"Then you are not poor?"

"No; I am rich. I did not think I could ever be glad of it; but I am glad of it now. When I think how grieved he would have been by the loss of it, and how glad he would have been that we should spend it together, I am not afraid of the burden of it. You will have years of plenty now, John, for all the hard and patient years when you spent yourself for others. When I think that you needn't toil any more, or deny yourself and live hardly as you did, to give to others who were not worthy of it; when I think of all the culture, and beauty, and delight we shall get out of it, I am glad, I am glad!"

What could he say in face of such pleading as this? How could he wound her loving generosity by the coldness of his hindering scruples? She would not give him a chance of expressing them. In the heat of her desire to make up to him for his years of leanness, she could have wished Jessie alive again. She had not loved Jessie, and Jessie had certainly not loved her; but in that strange ardour for martyrdom some women manifest, she could almost have courted Jessie's stabs that they might prove the steadfastness of her love.

While the two walked up and down, heedless of the shrewish quality of the air that blew from the hills, it was the future they finally talked of rather than the past, the future which John found it so difficult to adjust on these new lines.

"I want to go away," she said; "quite away from everything I have known. Should you like to travel, John?"

"Yes," said he, endeavouring to realise that three hundred pounds was no longer the utmost limit of his fortune.

"I want," she said, "to go far away to the other side of the world, to the places where he lived so long, and where I think it will be easier to feel near him than in London, where I lost him. After that I should like to see Italy, and France, and Switzerland; but I couldn't go to see those places alone, could I?"

"No, you certainly couldn't go alone."

"Then—shall we go together?"

When he saw that she leant on him and needed him, he surrendered the remnant of his pride, and consented to be made

rich for the rest of his life. By-and-by, when she had recovered some of her old gaiety, and used it to tease him and rally him wholesomely, she would quench any symptom of a returning scruple on his part, by remarking:

"I took you; you didn't take me. Now that I think of it, you never asked me at all!"

The minister was sparing of remark on Tilly's choice, as became an old bachelor who had never ventured into the dangerous region of matrimony; but 'Lisbeth was more free of comment.

"Ye've travelled a long road," she said, "to pick up what ye might have had at ye're own door. I aye thocht London was a muckle place, and an unco' place for men, but ye've managed ill, bairn, that ye've had to put up wi' yer ain cousin."

"You see," said Tilly with a laugh, "he was a little better than the others, 'Lisbeth."

The village, however, was at one with 'Lisbeth, and Tilly's example was held up as a warning to maidens of roving imagination. To fall back upon a cousin was an ignominious conclusion to a career which had promised brilliance, the more as the cousin bore a name that still stank in the popular memory. Tilly cared very little what others thought, confident of her own wisdom; and it is quite likely that, if she had married a Duke or even a Prince, the village would have spied some flaw in the choice, so hard is it to win honour in one's own country.

In London, the news was received with varying degrees of interest. Mrs. Popham heard it with a sigh that expressed a relief tempered by dark conjectures as to Fred's reception of the tidings.

In the City, two young people accepted it with a rapture of delight, which turned their frugal tea into a feast of aldermanic splendour; one of them slipped from behind the tray, and, opening a portfolio, fetched back a sketch of a girl's head, and set it in the place of honour, making believe that Tilly was there to share their happiness; and the other, who was young, though his head was grey, produced a purse, and together they counted the coins in it, and settled in what they should spare and stint themselves so that the picture might have the best frame London could produce, and be sent as a wedding gift to the bridegroom.

In the boarding-house the interest naturally ran high. In the privacy of the Bungalow, Honoria gave a sigh to the vanished lords of her imagination.

"He is a very good fellow," she said, "a very good fellow, but he isn't brilliant."

"Brilliance isn't a desirable quality in a husband," said Mrs. Drew, who had no complaint to make against her own on this score; "but goodness counts for everything in that venture."

A visit to Scotland, however, more than reconciled Honoria, and, on her return from the wedding she found the assembled household ready to hang flatteringly on her words.

She had dramatic instincts, and felt that she could have made an excellent actress, but for the lack of opportunity; but, on the night of her return, she seemed to have little command of words, and told her story brokenly, and with precipitate pauses; and the tears, which she had an ado to keep back, came freely to Mrs. Drew's eyes.

"You always had a tender side for mongrels, my dear," said the Major jestingly, a little put out, as men are, by any exhibition of the melting mood, and anxious to give a lighter turn to the talk. "Call him what you like, he's a confoundedly lucky young man. And what, I should like to know," he thundered, looking round, "is there to cry about?"

"Nothing, indeed," said Honoria promptly, "but it was the very prettiest wedding you ever heard of. It was like a beautiful story that you are sure will go on to the happy everafter stage, without needing to be told it in other three volumes. If you can ever make a novel like that," she pounced on Miss Dicey, who, stimulated by illustrious example, had produced a small note-book, and was writing minutely in it, "if you can write a novel like that, your fortune will be secured."

Mrs. Sherrington, who had sacrificed a moment to gossip, murmured that it must be very nice to be rich, with the oblique grudge of a good wife at Fate which had showered no such gifts into her lord's lap; but it was Mrs. Moxon who had the final word to say.

She spoke for quite a long time, and her conversation had a tedious briskness which seemed to exhilarate her while it deeply depressed everyone else. She glanced from a higher plane upon all the leading points of Tilly's brief career; and she ended by saying that her marriage with a young man who could not be allowed to call himself a gentleman either by birth, profession, or position, was a

perfectly just reward for the persistency with which she had preferred the society of unrefined persons, and had thrown away her chances of social promotion.

At this the slumbering fire in Honoria's breast burst into flame, and it sparkled in the eyes that a little while ago had been soft with tears.

"I believe," she said, "you would have liked her better if she had despised her uncle, and looked down on him, and laughed at him. Anyone can be a snob!" she cried wrathfully, "and think himself made of finer clay than his neighbours; we can find examples enough if that's the pattern we desire, but the world would be a better world if there were more Tillys in it!"

Perhaps Honoria was right, for the faithfulness that binds itself to reticence, and buries in a loving silence the faults and failures it may see, indeed, in another, but does not see to any loss or lessening of love and reverence, is so rare a quality that the world may be forgiven if it pass it by without recognition.

Honoria had recognised it; but Mrs. Moxon always frigidly maintained that her conception of Mr. Burton's character was coloured by the legacy he had left her in his will. It was not a large sum, though it lifted Honoria above the necessity of spending her life in a boarding-house, and allowed her to indulge in one or two impulses without suffering their retribution; but Mrs. Moxon held it sufficient for a bribe.

"As for me," she ended the discussion with a firmness that was truly admirable, "if Mr. Burton had left me his entire fortune, my opinion of him would remain unshaken. He was a vulgar, ill-bred person, and no one of true refinement could take any pleasure in his society."

OUR CATHERINES.

FIRST, of course, Catherine of Valois, who accepted Henry the Fifth after her two elder sisters, Isabella, Richard the Second's widow, and Marie the nun, had rejected him. Child of a mad father, she had even the greater drawback of a thoroughly profligate mother. However, she made a good wife during the two years that Henry lived. We can fancy how the French lessons went on of which Shakespeare gives samples. Henry would to the last "say and not blush to affirm that she was like an angel"; and

she would archly reply, that "men's tongues are pleines tromperies." And he would make mistakes in genders, calling her (as in courting days) "mon très cher et divine déesse"; and she would answer, "you have false French enough to deceive the most sage demoiselle in France." But Isabel of Bavaria's daughter could not live without a husband. Three years after Henry's death in 1422, the widow had taken up with a young Welsh squire, Owen Tudor, very poor, and very handsome. She married him, or was reported to have done so, just before the Duke of Gloucester got a Bill passed forbidding anyone to marry her without the consent of the King and Council. Marrying him, she was boycotted by the Court; and in 1436, he was sent to Newgate, and his wife took shelter in Bermondsey Abbey, where she died next year. Henry the Sixth buried her in Westminster, but made no reference on her tomb to her alleged second marriage. Her grandson, Henry the Seventh, son of Edmund Tudor and Margaret Beaufort, inserted the omission, and when he rebuilt the Lady Chapel, placed her in Henry the Fifth's tomb.

Next comes Catherine of Arragon, betrothed to Prince Arthur when barely a year old, and left a virgin widow when the bridegroom had reached his fifteenth year. "Send her at once back to Spain," said Ferdinand, when he heard the news, "and pay back the hundred thousand scudos which I paid as an instalment of her dowry." But Henry the Seventh did not at all like to lose the money, nor the prestige of the Spanish match, for (thanks to their conquest of the Moors) the Spanish were then the rising power in Europe. Just then Elizabeth of York died, and Henry actually proposed that Catherine should marry him. Queen Isabella was shocked, and urged the return to Spain; and, at last, a compromise was made, and poor Catherine was betrothed to her little brother-in-law. Isabella was satisfied, and, just before she died, obtained the Pope's dispensation; and then the two wily fathers tried to checkmate one another. The day before he was fifteen, Prince Henry was set to make a formal protest against the match before the Bishop of Winchester. This was to leave a door open in case his father could find a more advantageous match. Ferdinand, on his part, did not keep his word about the wedding portion; and between them, Catherine was nearly starved. During four-and-a-

half years in England, she complained that she was in debt for the food of her maids, and had only had two new dresses. Miserable she was indeed!—the shuttlecock in a heartless game of diplomacy, and in serious dread lest her affianced husband should be taken from her. Once she writes that for four months she had not seen him at all. The wretched uncertainty went on all through Henry the Seventh's life; but, just when Ferdinand had insisted that his daughter should be sent home, Henry died; and seven weeks after his accession his son made Catherine his Queen, crowning her along with himself in the Abbey. "My Lord the King adores her, and Her Highness him," wrote her Confessor, after they had been married a year. This went on for three years. Feasts and pageants, such as Henry loved, were the order of the day. Then came disappointments. Children were born, among them a Henry, only to live a few months and then die.

The French war followed, into which Henry was led by his father-in-law; and, returning victorious, Henry rode like a young hero post-haste to Richmond, "where," says Hall the chronicler, "was such a loving meeting that every creature rejoiced." Was it politics, or weariness of a wife, whom the Venetian Ambassador describes as "rather ugly than otherwise," that soon gave rise to whispers of a divorce? No one can tell. Ferdinand was behaving badly; like Louis Napoleon, in the Crimea and also after Solferino, he made a separate treaty with France just when Henry was eager to pursue his advantage. But everyone must have noticed what an unpleasant atmosphere of suspicion and doubt hangs over Tudor history. Statecraft—in which Henry the Seventh was such an adept—had become the rule of action; and, besides the character of the Kings, there is the Italian influence, then for the first time imported into England. Poor Catherine was forced into politics, and naturally preferred Charles the Fifth, her nephew, to Francis the First, though the latter was chivalrously courteous to her during the pageant of the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

Henry's love had now cooled down to esteem. In 1525, he made his son by Elizabeth Blount Duke of Richmond, and gave him precedence even of the Princess Mary, and a year after he told the poor Queen that they must separate; he could not bear any longer to be living in sin with his brother's widow. Wolsey comes in very

badly at this first stage of the business. He prevented the Queen from speaking to the Spanish Ambassador, except in his presence; and when good Bishop Fisher wished to confer with her, he made him leave the matter to the King. Catherine was therefore left friendless, till Campeggio's alternative—that either the King should change his purpose, or that she should go into a nunnery—took her by surprise. "Go into a nunnery," was the advice urged on her on all hands. "Go; for the King will certainly not marry again while you're alive. Go; you are living in sin. The Papal brief of dispensation is a forgery."

Catherine behaved nobly. She would not give up her position as a wife; but instead of moving heaven and earth with her outcry, all she claimed was to be allowed to ask Charles the Fifth's ambassador to write to the Emperor, so that she might have a fair hearing at Rome. It is humiliating to think of her throwing herself at Campeggio's feet in the Legatine Court at Blackfriars, and begging him to consider her helpless position as a foreigner, her own and her daughter's honour, and that of the King himself. Then, when the two Cardinals sought her out in her rooms at Bridewell, she met Wolsey's Latin speech with "Nay, good my lord, speak to me in English; for I can, I thank God, both speak and understand it, though I do not understand some English."

In support of her wish to be tried at Rome, she asked: "What think you, my Lord? Will any Englishman counsel me or be friendly to me, against the King's pleasure?"

She was wrong. Bishop Fisher came into the Legatine Court and told the two Cardinals that he would justify the validity of the marriage. A brave speech of an honest man—one of the few honest men in an age which was prolific in rogues.

The Pope at last, moved by Catherine's nephew, transferred the hearing to Rome. But Henry determined to have his own way, however Rome might decide, but in public he still kept up appearances. He went out hunting with the Queen, and even kept Christmas with her at Greenwich; though most of her time she was left at Richmond, while he was dallying with Anne Boleyn in London. He was determined, however, not to let the Pope have the settlement of the matter. All the delays which our historians have charged on the Roman Court were due to him; he even refused to appear, except by allowing an

"excusator" to put in the plea that he was not bound to appear at all. His Privy Councillors went on worrying Catherine to have the matter tried by English Judges—four prelates and four temporal lords; but she kept firm, thereby so enraging Henry that he left her for ever, without even saying "good-bye," turning her out of Windsor, whither he went with Anne, and ordering her daughter to leave her. Poor woman! she had not a creature in England to speak a friendly word to her, save Chapuys. All her English lawyers threw up the case when it was carried to Rome. The Pope, too, temporised, being in a sore strait: for the Emperor on one side was his chief ally; and, on the other, England was far too rich a farm to be recklessly thrown up.

Meanwhile, public opinion in England was strongly on her side. There were women's riots. Anne was insulted, and the King was bade to take back his lawful wife. The friars took her side. Peto, Provincial of the Franciscans, preached at Greenwich on Easter Day before the King, strongly denouncing the divorce. A King's chaplain, Curwen, was set up next Sunday to answer him.

"I wish," he said, "Father Peto was here; it must be through fear that he has withdrawn himself."

Whereupon another friar, Elstowe, started up, crying:

"Nay, the good Father is not afraid; nor, indeed, has he cause for fear. And what he said, that can I, unworthy though I am, prove by sure warrant of Scripture."

Peto and Elstowe were brought before the Council and threatened by the nobles—a peculiarity of Henry's reign is the mean, time-serving spirit of the nobility, mostly new-made. One noble said:

"Ye deserve to be tied up in sacks and flung into the Thames."

"Threaten that to courtiers," replied Elstowe; "as for us, we know right well the way to heaven lies as open by water as by land."

Henry now found a great ally in Francis. They had a meeting, these two Kings, in October, 1532, to convince the Pope that they were so united that to offend one meant to offend both. The idea was, that poor, weak Clement, thinking two Kings were stronger than one Emperor, would wholly throw Catherine over. But Henry could not wait. In January, 1533, he secretly married his mistress, and at Easter the marriage was divulged. Anne was pro-

claimed Queen, and Catherine was ordered to style herself Princess Dowager. Yet, a month later, Cranmer opened his Court to try the validity of the first marriage! Catherine, to Cranmer's great relief, would not appear, and in a fortnight the case was decided, of course in Henry's favour.

Henry was determined she should no longer be called Queen. The servants who declined to be sworn to her anew as Princess were removed; and it was proclaimed by sound of trumpet that Princess only must she be called.

A priest, named Harrison, was bold enough to cry: "She is Queen nevertheless; and Nan Bullen is none;" but he was at once imprisoned. She was persecuted, too, in a mean and galling way. Anne coveted for her expected child a splendidly embroidered christening cloth, which Catherine had brought from Spain, and Henry actually asked his Queen to give it to her successor. She refused, and was, therefore, removed from healthy Amptill to marshy Buckden, in Huntingdon, whence they tried to get her away to a yet more aguish place in the Isle of Ely. She, however, locked herself up in her room, and said nothing but force should make her move. Henry revenged himself by reducing her household, cutting off her allowance, and so surrounding her with spies that she could hardly write a letter. Her daughter, too, was told to give up the name of Princess in favour of the newly-born Elizabeth.

Catherine spent most of her time in prayer, having a window in her chamber with a prospect into the chapel. The stones round this window, her women noticed, were always wet with her tears. Against her rival she would not listen to a harsh word.

"Hold your peace," she said to a gentlewoman who began to use strong language; "curse her not, but pray for her, for shortly you shall have much need to pity and lament her case."

Meanwhile it was certain that the King was trying to poison her. Parliament declared Anne Queen, and gave her the jointure settled on Catherine. The Commons, indeed, protested, and refused an "aid" against the Scots; but chiefly out of fear, lest by way of reprisal English merchants in Spain should be ill-treated.

The Pope at last, in 1534, gave sentence in her favour; but Henry, who had so far yielded to the outcry against her ill-treatment as to remove her to a better house at

Kimbolton, retorted by sending Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, and Lee, Archbishop of York, to try and make her swear to the new Act of Succession, which put her daughter aside.

"If you don't, the penalty is death," said they. And, when they could not intimidate her, and she firmly held by the Pope's sentence, they answered in the historic words: "The Bishop of Rome hath no authority in England."

Meanwhile, everybody was wondering that Charles the Fifth did not send an army to insist on justice being done to his niece. He was cold and cautious; and Cromwell hinted to his ambassador that "it was great pity the King and Emperor should cease to be friends on account of two ladies, who, after all, were mortal, and might be removed."

"They think day and night of getting rid of these good ladies," writes Chapuys.

Such treatment, and the murder of Fisher, Sir T. More, and the Charterhouse Monks, for refusing to admit that the Pope had no right to interfere, told on her health.

When Chapuys at last got leave to visit her, he found that for six days she had only had two hours' sleep. His visit—lasting four days—cheered her immensely; and so did the devotion of Donna Maria de Salinas, who had come with her from Spain, and was now Lady Willoughby. She appeared before the castle gates, and, having no pass, begged leave to come in and warm herself. Bedingfield, the gentleman jailor, did not dare to keep out the Duke of Suffolk's mother-in-law; and once inside, she ran to her old mistress's room, and never left her again. But early in January, 1536, the end came.

"Pray for me, and pray that I may forgive the King, my husband," she said to her maids, to one of whom she dictated a letter of forgiveness to Henry.

His words, when he heard of her death, were:

"God be praised; we are now delivered from all fear of war." And next day he was at a ball, clothed from head to foot in yellow, with a white feather in his cap.

Her physician thought she had been poisoned. "She had never been well since she drank a certain Welsh beer."

The embalming and enclosing in lead were done with indecent haste by the chandler of the castle; everyone else, even her physician, being turned out of the room. Long after, the chandler told her

confessor, under seal of secrecy, that the heart was black inside and out, with a round, black lump sticking to the outside. "Cancer," says modern science; but, anyhow, she was done to death as certainly as if poison had been administered.

Henry's second Catherine was daughter of Lord Edward Howard, who was with his father, the Duke of Norfolk, at Flodden, and for his services there got three shillings and four pence a day for three years. Then he was appointed thief-taker, with "diets" worth twenty shillings a day; but, with ten children, he found it impossible to pay his way. Even the Controllorship of Calais did not ease his difficulties, which were not lessened by a second marriage. Catherine, therefore, was rather dragged than brought up. First, grinding poverty, then a stepmother from whom she was glad to escape to the service of the old Duchess of Norfolk. She had just got betrothed to her cousin, Culpepper, when Henry was ridding himself of ugly Anne of Cleves.

Catherine was not strictly beautiful, though even the critical Marillac, French Ambassador, allowed that she had a very winning face. Gardiner, therefore, and the Catholic party, threw her in the King's way; and, when the subservient Parliament besought him, "for the good of his people to marry with the hope of more numerous offspring," he put her in Anne's place. She was foolish enough to make Dereham her secretary, and to have, through Lady Rochford, stolen interviews with Culpepper. Cranmer got news of this, and, being Gardiner's enemy, was anxious to make the most of it.

Whether the wretched Queen had been guilty since her marriage no one can tell. Confessions count for little where torture is freely applied; and she resolutely denied it, alleging that, being Dereham's wife, she had committed adultery by marrying Henry. The King believed her, "shedding bitter tears;" but, if he really loved her, his love did not hinder him from setting Parliament—subservient as usual—to compass her death.

Cranmer had solemnly assured her of "His Grace's mercy extended to her;" and this had lifted the poor girl out of an agony of fear which threatened to drive her mad. She recovered her spirits, and was reported "very cheerful, and more plump and pretty than ever; as careful about her dress, and as imperious and wilful, as when she was with the King."

She trusted Henry's word, which Parliament saved him the disgrace of breaking, by enacting that the Bill of Attainder should not be signed by him in the usual way, but that he should grant letters patent under the Great Seal, and afterwards give his assent to whatever might be done.

A more shuffling transaction it would be hard to find in all history. Catherine probably believed to the last that the King meant to keep his word, and that his letting her rehearse her execution that she might see how to place her head on the block, was only a grim joke.

Lady Rochford, who had gone quite mad, was executed with her, the comment of a bystander being that "they made a most godly and christian end, uttering with godly words and steadfast countenances, their lively faith in Christ's blood only."

Henry's last matrimonial venture, Catherine Parr, had already been twice married; first, when a mere girl to Lord Borough, "an old man distracted of memorie," whose second son's wife was fourteen years Catherine's senior; next, to John Neville, Lord Latimer, who went on the first Pilgrimage of Grace, but kept himself clear from the second. She was, in her bringing-up, a contrast to Catherine Howard. Her father, Sir T. Parr, of Kendal, left her mother a wealthy widow of two-and-twenty; but, instead of marrying again, she devoted herself to educating her three children. Catherine became quite a scholar, and was not only able to argue with the King—though she had to take care to be always on the same side—but effectually looked after the education of her stepchildren, teaching Elizabeth French, and looking after Edward's handwriting. A kind-hearted woman, she interfered as far as she dared to shield the victims of the ferocious Six Articles; and she persuaded Henry to restore his two daughters, who for some years had been treated as bastards, to their places as Princesses.

It is a mistake to talk of her as a Protestant. There were no Protestants in England then, except a foreigner here and there; the English remained good Catholics while accepting the Royal supremacy. But men's minds were getting more and more controversial, as Henry bitterly complained in Parliament; and Catherine, like most clever women, was very fond of controversy. Everybody knows how she once nearly got into trouble through not giving way when Henry had had enough of an argu-

ment. "A good hearing it is," he exclaimed, "when women become such clerks; and a thing much to my comfort to come in mine old days to be taught by my wife." Fox, a very poor authority, is probably wrong in saying that Gardiner had anything to do with the "articles of heresy," which were drawn up against her in consequence of this rashness. Henry, who was impartially killing priests for questioning his supremacy, and Dutch Anabaptists and their followers for speaking against the Mass, did not need any jackal in heretic-hunting. Fortunately for Catherine the paper dropped out of his bosom and was carried to her; "whereupon she fell incontinent into a great melancholy and agony, bewailing, and taking on in such sort as was lamentable to see." The King sent her his physician, and himself went to comfort her. And then she told him that her arguing was only meant to minister talk, and while away the time in his infirmity, not to assert opinions opposed to his wisdom, "Is it so, sweetheart?" cried he. "Then are we perfect friends." No doubt she was very grateful; but gratitude did not prevent her from plighting her troth to (i.e., practically marrying) Lord Seymour of Sudeley, the Protector's brother, almost before Henry was cold in his coffin. She has this excuse—that she had meant to marry him on Lord Latimer's death, but her "will was overruled by a higher power." They could not publicly marry without leave; and the Protector was strongly against the match. But Seymour talked Edward over, saying he wanted a wife, and leading the boy (who at first suggested his sister Mary), to make the proposal, and write for him to the lady. It was not a happy match. The future Lord Admiral was "fierce in courage, courtly in fashion, in person stately, in voice magnificent, but somewhat empty in matter." Moreover, he would flirt desperately with Princess Elizabeth, taking liberties with her even before his wife, and declaring he cared not if everybody saw it. The Duchess of Somerset, too, would not yield precedence to the Queen Dowager after she became Seymour's wife. Seymour retorted by buying the wardship of Lady Jane Grey, and setting her up as Edward's wife that was to be, instead of the daughter for whom the Protector destined that position.

Seymour, we know, was worsted in the struggle, and paid the penalty with his life. But before that, eighteen months after Henry's death, Catherine died in

child-birth, aged only thirty-six, raving that she was ill-treated by those around her. They said her husband had poisoned her; but that was said of so many in those bad old days. She would have been useful to him, having much influence with Edward, in helping on the Lady Jane Gray business; while "her pregnant wittiness, joined with right wonderful grace of eloquence," might have saved him from getting into deadly feud with his brother.

Of our last Catherine there is not much to say. She brought Charles the Second a good dowry. Portugal was afraid of being squeezed out of existence between Spain and Holland, the former suppressing her at home, the latter seizing her colonies. So, in consideration of an English alliance, she gave Tangiers, "commanding the mouth of the Mediterranean"; Bombay, then the less important of the two; full religious and commercial freedom to British subjects; and the—for that time—vast sum of two million crusados (about three hundred thousand pounds). The Spanish and Dutch tried to thwart the match, the Spanish Ambassador alleging that the Princess was not only ugly, but incapable of child-bearing, and also that it would be very impolitic for Charles to marry a Catholic! "We," he undertook, "will pay an equal dowry to any Protestant Princess whom the King may choose." Portugal would, probably, have been thrown over, had not Louis the Fourteenth taken Catherine's side; and having done so, he did it with his usual vigour.

So they were betrothed, to the joy of the English merchants, "at setting up firmly the most beneficiallest trade that ever our nation was engaged in," and the exuberant delight of the Portuguese. Then came disputes about how the portion should be paid; and when the bride's ship put into Portsmouth, only the Duke of York was there to receive her—Charles being kept in London by State affairs—and Mrs. Palmer.

Their married life must have been dull for both. Catherine, very ill educated, could not even speak French. However, Charles condescended to say: "though her face is not so exact as to be called a beauty, her eyes are excellent good, and there's nothing in her face that, in the least degree, can disgust one. Her long hair is a grand adornment; and, if I have any skill in physiognomy, she must be as good a woman as ever was born." Indeed, for a time, her childish simplicity charmed him; and, as

she was very fond of dancing, the whole summer of 1661 was filled with a round of festivities, including "the most splendid pageant ever seen on the Thames." But Mrs. Palmer got ill-tempered, and insisted on being one of the Ladies of the Bed-chamber. Catherine, not knowing who she was, received her graciously; but when some kind friend told her, she fainted, and, recovering, struck the name off her list, and wanted to go back to Portugal. Charles removed her Portuguese household as "too prudish;" and Catherine's active resistance became passive.

At last, by Clarendon's counsel, she gave in. In fact, no one was ever a truer victim than she to the supposed interests of her country. Charles even proposed to divorce her, à la Henry the Eighth, because her children died prematurely. Buckingham offered to steal her away to some colony, so that Charles might set up a plea of desertion, and that Miss Stewart might be a new Anne Boleyn.

Her only compensation was that, when the contrivers of the diabolical Popish Plot compassed her death, Charles stuck to her, declaring that, "though men thought he had a mind to a new wife, he would not see an innocent woman wronged." Then, the charges of treason falling through, Shaftesbury was mean enough to go on another tack and propose a divorce, that the King might marry a Protestant wife.

At last the wicked Parliament, which had succeeded in killing good old Lord Stafford was dissolved, and one of her accusers, Fitzharris, being brought to execution, declared that he had been wrought upon by the Whig Sheriffs of London to malign the Queen.

Charles then (1681) began to be very kind to her; but the Duchess of Portsmouth came back, and poor Catherine had again fallen into neglect when her husband died.

Annoyance pursued her in her widowhood; she made Feversham her chamberlain, and Mrs. Grundy at once began to gossip. Lawsuits kept her in England, where she was present at the birth of that Prince of Wales whom the anti-Jacobites so shamelessly asserted to be supposititious. Then she was delayed through William's meanness in regard to escort; so that not till 1692 did she leave England, carrying with her, we may be sure, no very high opinion either of the people or of the Royal Family.

LONDON LOCOMOTION.

WHEN, a quarter of a century ago, the Underground Railway was first inaugurated, a new era seemed to be opening out in London locomotion. Who could have guessed that, after this wonderful stride in the way of progress, things would have stood almost stationary as far as the public convenience is concerned for another five-and-twenty years. True, that the great iron circle has been completed, and Monument and Tower are both more accessible; but here the advantage is to the Londoner almost infinitesimal. Nor have any great results come to hand from the promised opening out of London to the great trunk lines. The wary traveller still drives to Paddington, St. Pancras, Euston, or Victoria, to the principal terminus of the line on which he may intend to take a long railway journey. He knows all the time that he might begin his journey at almost any station near his residence; but he also knows that the transit will be one of hours probably before he begins his journey, and that when he joins his train he will find every eligible place occupied; and, if he be travelling with a family party, that party will be inevitably divided and packed away in half-a-dozen different carriages.

In the same way, if paterfamilias is returning from his holiday at the seaside or on the Continent, he learns the futility of attempting to reach his home by any of the connecting links that railway guides may offer to his notice. It is bad enough, indeed, in a wearied and probably savage condition to be jolted about for an hour or so in the interior of a "growler," but worse still is the turn-out at a suburban junction: the scramble for baggage, the dismal wait in a windy wilderness of platforms crowded with local passengers, but completely bare of porters, with a cab journey at the end which, if shorter than the other, is perhaps more adventurous. No, the benefits that we have been promised are but illusory; the inconveniences from increased traffic and overcrowding are tangible enough.

Still we are not going to undervalue the original advantages afforded by the Underground Railway, and people whose homes and places of business are in direct communication thereby, have not much cause of complaint. In fact, we may say roughly, that between East and West, the communications are good and fairly

rapid; but how is it between North and South? If you are living in a suburb on the Northern heights of London—probably the best and healthiest part of town, and especially so for a brain-worker—and you have daily to visit the neighbourhood of the Strand, well, the tram-lines are carefully tabooed wherever they would be most useful, and your only resort is the useful, familiar, but especially ugly and uncomfortable omnibus. In fine weather, indeed, what more pleasant than the outside of an omnibus, with the panorama of the streets unrolling in a leisurely way under the eyes; but how few are the fine days in comparison with those that are very much otherwise; and in fog and rain, sleet and snow, what a broken reed does the omnibus prove in our hour of need!

The street corner is wild and gusty, the pavement is wet and slimy, and the road, into which you must plunge in order to intercept the omnibus before it stops, is inches deep in mud. Half-a-dozen other people are following in the same procession; there are half-a-score more waiting at the corner. The omnibus is full, and there is only the chance that a passenger or two may be going to alight, when the most unscrupulous and pushing of the party will win the day. Then, if you succeed against hope and the doctrine of probabilities, how dismal is the journey! Dripping umbrellas and wet waterproofs distil moisture around. A steam rises up all round and congeals upon the glasses. Wedged tightly together, the time passes as in a feverish dream, such a dream as you are likely to experience as one of the results of your journey.

In comparison with such misery, how trifling seem the inconveniences of the underground route! On a rough winter night the sulphurous fumes of the tunnel feel warm and comfortable. A train rolls up. Instead of the dozen inside places offered by the omnibus, here are between two and three hundred seats at the public disposal, and, even if the train be full, as will happen sometimes, there is no prudery or hesitation in making room for those who mean to travel as long as there is even standing room. Then the certainty of reaching home in good time puts you in the humour to make light of slight inconveniences. It is what betting men call a certainty, for there is only a sort of three-hundred-to-one chance of a block. But that is an affair that surpasses in horror anything that can happen in an omnibus, unless, indeed, it be an overturn.

For there again the tram line comes in. Commodious and convenient is the tram-car; but it leads nowhere; it stops short of everywhere. Tradesmen in the main lines of traffic oppose the tram line fiercely, and they are mighty in Vestries and Public Boards, and will prevail. The same short-sighted policy that long kept the terminuses of the great railway lines in the suburbs, now keeps the tram-car out of all the great avenues of traffic. There is a sort of Nemesis in the fact that when you do come to the tram lines they give the omnibuses many a shrewd turn.

Yet we should be thankful for our "Underground" if we could only get it to move our way. But its regards are turned anywhere except to the teeming streets that ought to form its great feeding grounds. These railways have all a sort of ambition to be great trunk lines. One section has its mind fixed upon Oxford (save the mark!) when there is Oxford Street so much nearer, and ten times more populous, in people who want to travel, anyhow. Then another section has great developments in the direction of Hounslow and Windsor, meaning, perhaps, to get to Bath eventually. It is all like collecting raindrops when a full perennial spring is close at hand.

But, if we have few hopes from any new underground schemes, is there no alternative plan? If we are forbidden to burrow, may we not soar? There is plenty of empty space between earth and sky, and over the public streets. This space is surely public property? If our tram lines must not venture upon the crowded streets, what objection is there to having them in the air? The New Yorkers have an air line, which answers extremely well; but we need not follow slavishly in their footsteps. It would be a real misfortune to have locomotive engines vapouring and fusing over our heads, and horses are out of the question; but a rope connection, driven by stationary engines, or in the coming time, perhaps, electric motors, would solve the problem.

Our object is not to put a cut and dried scheme before the world, but only to help to get the idea put into people's minds—the idea, that is, of having overhead lines, to accommodate the growing traffic, and to cure the increasing congestion of our thoroughfares. The supporting columns of such an overhead system would not be more in the way of the traffic, which would still go on below, than so many lamp-posts,

and the air lines would not be in competition with, but auxiliary to, the existing lines of rail and tram, while giving the public ready access to every part of London. A line from Camden Town to Charing Cross would be of immense service to Metropolitan traffic, and, extending to Westminster, it should join hands over Westminster Bridge with the great network of South London trams. For in its tramway accommodation the "Surrey side" is very far in advance of the North of London; but as the lines have no outlet over the river, their usefulness is greatly crippled.

But for our own part we should like to see all the tram lines relegated to the aerial regions. The constant repairs that are necessary, involving the breaking up of the roadway; the danger to all kinds of wheeled vehicles, arising from the skidding of the wheels on the tram lines, represent only a portion of the inconveniences which attend the mixture of railway and roadway. And then it is quite evident that horses are quite out of place in drawing a tram-car. The cruel strain involved in starting a loaded tram, especially against even a slight incline, soon breaks up a strong and valuable horse. There is waste here as well as cruelty, and yet the objections to steam-power in the thronging traffic of our thoroughfares are hardly likely to be overcome.

Anyhow it is quite clear that something must be done to improve the general circulation of London streets. All the great districts westward from Temple Bar to Charing Cross—the lawyers, the journalists, the printers, the publishers, the conductors of the thousand and one enterprises that find a local habitation about the Strand; the theatres, the entertainments, and the artists of all kinds who serve their various wants—all this world, as important perhaps, in its way, as the world of finance and speculation, is left out in the cold as regards means of locomotion, especially in connection with those northern heights of London, which are, after all, as has already been remarked, the brightest and most healthy for those whose brains are taxed to the utmost in their various pursuits among the fogs and mystic darkness of a London winter.

THE CHILDREN'S FAVOURITE

It was the first of January, and the snow, thick and white on the London house-tops, had degenerated in the streets

to mud and slush. Gas was alight everywhere, for the fog was thick, and the New Year had arrived in anything but a pleasant garb. Gerard Lorrimer had left his bright home in the country some days sooner than was necessary, to be present at the Christmas Tree in the Children's Ward of the City Hospital. As the train bore him from the glittering country, where the sunlight gleamed through branches frosted with rime, into the darkness and dirtiness of London, Gerard Lorrimer's thoughts strayed in the old direction, that contact with sordid humanity immediately spoils the beauties of nature.

It was yet early in the forenoon, but already one end of the ward was screened off from the eager eyes of the children, though the top of a large fir-tree towered above the screens.

As Gerard entered the long ward with its fifty little cribs, he was greeted with a perfect shower of childish welcomes: "Mr. Lolo!" "Merry Christmas, Mr. Lolo!" "Mr. Lolo's tum back!" "'Appy New Year, Mr. Lolo!" and a nurse's smiling face peeped round the screen as she said: "We are so glad to see you, Mr. Lolo."

Each little hand held out in greeting got a return grasp, one still, upturned face got a grave kiss, and then Mr. Lolo vanished behind the mystic screens.

He was only a student of twenty, a tall, strong young man, with a powerful face and a pleasant voice; but he was an immense favourite with the children, who had abbreviated his name of "Lorrimer" to "Lolo," until he was known throughout the whole hospital by that appellation only. It was the height of a small patient's ambition to have Mr. Lolo for "my doctor"—all students and dressers are doctors in the children's eyes; but those who could not have the professional services of the favourite were not debarred from the labours of love which occupied all Mr. Lolo's spare moments. The merest babe who had dropped a toy, had only to put its little fist to its eyes and begin to whimper; and, if Lolo was in the ward, he immediately divined the cause of grief, and restored the lost plaything with a smile which would have drawn an answer from Henry the First himself.

Now, there was eager watch kept for the appearance of Mr. Lolo's head above the screen, as some decoration was added to the top of the tree.

"Der he is!" "He's dot a dolly!" "Hi! Mr. Lolo."

Lolo turned and made a face at his eager watchers, and then dropped down behind the screen again, amidst shouts of laughter.

At last the tree was finished, and Lolo aided the nurses to turn all the cribs towards the central point of attraction, and then came the dinner-hour, when students were bound to leave the ward.

Lolo strode away to his lodgings to get a hasty meal, and see whether any letters were awaiting him. He had a habit of becoming interested in the future of his patients which was bad for his private purse. He sat now with creased forehead, perusing an appeal for "just a little aid," knowing well he had given in Christmas gifts, every penny he had to spare. It was enough to make a man, reared in the country, sick at heart, to be brought thus suddenly face to face with the misery and vice of London. What use was it that Lolo worked all day and read half the night, he could not relieve one-tenth of the deserving cases of pain and poverty that came under his own individual observation. There was always something left undone; there was always the weary thought that the meal he was eating might have saved some starving wretch, that, though he was in warmth and comfort, hundreds were in cold and grief.

But there were the children! The wrinkles left Lolo's brow as he glanced at the clock and saw it was time to light the tree.

"Thank Heaven for the children!" he exclaimed as he strode off to the ward, where he received the usual enthusiastic welcome: they, at least, were comparatively innocent and happy, and capable of ignoring all but the pleasure of the moment.

"Where is Bessie, Sister Mary?"

"We had to discharge her, Mr. Lolo, she was getting no better, and the bed was wanted for another case."

"But Bessie had so looked forward to the tree, poor child! Tell me, Sister Mary, may I not go and fetch her just for this afternoon?"

"Of course you may, Mr. Lolo, and God bless you!"

Only a few streets off Bessie was lying alone in a cold room, crying in a hopeless, endless way, when there was a sound of feet on the stairs, and Bessie's sobs stopped suddenly in a perfect rapture of surprise as Mr. Lolo's head peeped in at the door. "Mother had gone out," so a neighbour was hastily informed that Bessie would be

back before evening, and then perched on Lolo's broad shoulder, with tears yet standing in her laughing eyes, the wizened wee mite was carried off to the Christmas Tree.

Oh! what an afternoon that was for the children! A bright spot long remembered in many dull little lives. There were lots of visitors in rich garments strolling about; there was the wondrous tree laden with gifts, and lighted with hundreds of little candles; there was a toy for each child's "very own," and there were also oranges and sponge-cakes for tea. Who would have thought that those cheery little ones, all laughing with delight, had each a burden of physical suffering to bear, and a daily portion of weakness and weariness to pass through?

It was over. In some magic way the cribs were back in their places, the tree and the visitors had vanished, and most of the tired children were sleeping with arms tightly wound round their newly-received treasures. Lolo returned to the ward after showing some friends round the building, and found Bessie sleeping quietly on a blanket before the fire.

"How can I take her back to her dreary home, Sister Mary?"

"You must, Mr. Lolo. She has had some beef-tea, and is all right for to-night. We must try and get her sent to Margate."

Sister Mary was older and more experienced than Lolo, and had given up complaining of the inevitable. She went cheerfully on her way doing what she could, and leaving the rest to Heaven. Lolo had less faith, and rebelled against the fate which banished the poor little girl from the warm fireside. He lifted Bessie gently in his arms, and, covering her face from the fog with his handkerchief, carried her, still sleeping, to her home, and laid her on the wretched bed.

"I have brought Bessie Langley back," he said to a woman on the floor below.

"Oh, sir! be you a gentleman from the 'orspital? I do wish you'd step in and see my 'usband. 'E is that bad I dunno what to do wi' 'im, and they won't take 'im in there without a letter, seeing as it isn't a haccident."

Lolo went into the room where a man lay on a bed breathing heavily. It did not need the use of the stethoscope to tell that he had inflammation of the lungs.

"Have you had a doctor?"

"'E went to some chemist on Monday, not feeling well and not being equal to 'is

work, and the chemist 'e give 'im a pill and told 'im to come again; but 'e 'asn't been able to go, as you may see."

"Can you make a poultice?"

"Yes, sir. I 'ave done a lot o' nurning in my time; wot with 'aving ten children, mostly gells, as was given to——"

"Put a poultice of linseed-meal on the back here, and on the chest here, and I will send a doctor to you. My man, let me raise you a bit, and your breathing will be easier."

"Double pneumonia; too bad to be moved?" said the pariah doctor when Lolo told him. "I fear that is hopeless. Good nursing is an absolute necessity, and that wife of his is the biggest fool that wags a tongue in this babel of ours. Believe me, I once found her putting on a poultice in a waterproof bag so that it shouldn't mess the clothes! Hang the women for being either angels or idiots!"

"Is there no district nurse who would help?"

"You might ask at the Home; but the good Sisters are overworked as it is."

Lolo went off to the Sisterhood and persuaded the Superior to send a nurse down, and then, having dined at a restaurant, he returned to his lodgings to read. Luckily his work interested him that night and took away his thoughts from individual suffering to the great subject of the general alleviation of pain by anæsthetics.

"I don't think bromide of ethyl has had a fair trial," he said next day as he stood chatting to one of the house physicians.

"I don't think it has; but it is rather risky to experiment on one's patients."

"Well, I want a tooth dug out, and, as business is dull, I am willing to try the bromide."

"Are you, old fellow? That is good, for you can recount your sensations afterwards, which a dog cannot. And, I say, we must try grafting on that boy in Charity who was burnt. You don't mind parting with a few portions of your epidermis, I suppose?"

"Oh, no! Anything you like!" said Lolo, laughing. "My vile body is quite at your disposal."

The bromide of ethyl was not a success, and Lolo did not look well for some days following the experiment. He was going up for his degree at the London University the next autumn, and reading for that, together with attendance at the hospital lectures and dissections, and in the wards, told even on his splendid health.

Some people connected with a "mission" also got hold of him, and, under the belief that they were keeping a fast young medical student out of temptation persuaded him to spend many evenings at a boys' club. Lolo never liked to refuse an appeal for help, and his assistance was given to all who asked. "Have you the time?" asked the Chaplain, hesitatingly, as he concluded a request for aid in re-arranging the chapel seats.

"I will make time," replied Lolo gravely, for indeed he could not see from whence a spare moment was to be snatched in his busy day. Just then a nurse came along, bearing a large can of milk. Hospital etiquette is very strict, but it broke down before Lolo's noble longing to share all burdens.

"Excuse me," he said, hurrying after nurse and extending his hand.

"No, sir," replied the girl blushing, and swinging the can across to the other hand. If the house-governor were to see her letting a student address her, much less aid her, on the stairs, there would be trouble; and should the students meet Lolo carrying milk, he would be laughed at for months.

Lolo was a man and scorned these trifles. He stepped in front of the girl and said, smiling: "Put down the can, please."

She was constrained to obey for sake of quiet, though she remonstrated, saying she could carry it quite well.

"It is not fair to ask the nurses to do this," said Lolo, indignantly.

"The ward-maid was out, and the milk was wanted; besides, I am every bit as strong as our ward-maid, who has to carry up four cans of milk every day."

"It ought to come up in the lift."

"Oh, Mr. Lolo! if we none of us have heavier burdens than that to bear, we shall be lucky. Please let me take it now!"

But Lolo marched straight into the children's ward, and placed the milk in the pantry in the calmest way.

The Sister called him to see some child, and having got him into a quiet corner, lectured him sternly on turning himself into a milkman. "Where is your self-respect?" she asked, in conclusion.

"My self-respect and right to the name of a gentleman would have gone for ever, had I allowed a young girl to carry such a heavy weight in my presence."

"You are hopelessly Quixotic, Mr. Lolo; may you learn common-sense some day," and the Sister passed on to a crying child.

No one was much surprised when Lolo was absent from the wards for a day or two. There was a general feeling that such extraordinary energy must work itself out, and require recuperation by a day or two in bed. Mr. Tabor, the house-surgeon, strolled across one evening to see how Lolo was.

"Hullo! old fellow; so you've caved in at last! You'll be more reasonable in future."

"Don't come near me, Tabor, I'm afraid I'm in for a fever. Shouldn't wonder if some of those little wretches have given me measles."

"Any rash? What's your temperature?"

"No rash yet; temperature 102°. I caved in because I didn't want to carry infection anywhere."

"You look rather feverish; but with your physique you'll pull through everything. Shall I send the Chief over to see you?"

"To-morrow? Yes; unless I send word to the contrary. Was Warrenport there to-day?"

"Yes, and operated on that boy in Ten bed; but, I fear, unsuccessfully."

"Poor child! How did he bear it?"

"Very badly; Warrenport did it without chloroform."

"What!" shouted Lolo, starting up in bed.

"My dear fellow, do be still! It was a slight affair, and Warrenport said he couldn't come again to do it. He had forgotten to send word to Sister Mary that he was going to operate, and the child had just swallowed a big dinner; he couldn't give him ether."

"May I never live to become a great surgeon, if I must needs grow like that man!"

"You are feverish, Lolo; I mustn't talk to you. Have you got all you want?"

"Yes, thank you; Mother Green looks after me. I say, tell Ten I am so sorry for him. I wish I could go to the ward!"

"You might give them all scarlet fever if you did. Sister Mary told me to tell you she has got Bessie a bed at Seaford."

"That is one good thing," said Lolo weakly.

"Good-night; and I hope you'll be better to-morrow."

"Good-night," replied Lolo, closing his weary eyes.

The next day there was a rumour that Lolo had been removed to the Fever Hospital; but an unusual number of acci-

dents received, kept Sister Mary too busy to make inquiries. When Mr. Tabor came round on the following morning, however, she found an opportunity to ask :

"Have you heard anything of Mr. Lolo?"

"He is at the Small-pox Hospital," was the grave reply. "He must have caught it maundering about the back streets, as he was so fond of doing."

Sister Mary did not answer ; but she felt uneasy, and listened to all chance scraps of conversation she could hear as the day went on.

"Poor old Lolo is down with small-pox." "A virulent type, too, I believe. He's very strong, though ; he'll pull through." "Matron has just heard that Lolo's people have been sent for," said someone later on.

"Wonder if he wasn't vaccinated last autumn with the rest of us?"

"No ; he went as far as Malta with poor Earle just then. There is an awful lot of small-pox all about now, and I am down amongst the out-patients."

In the evening Sister Mary strolled down to the entrance-hall to get the latest news. Students stood about in quiet groups, their low voices harping on one name—Lolo.

"What is the last bulletin?" asked Sister Mary, joining a group.

"We have just telegraphed to know ; wait for the answer, Sister Mary."

"Sister Mary, he is very ill ;" and one young fellow stretched out his hand for sympathy in the simplicity of his grief. Sister Mary grasped and held it, knowing vaguely that Lolo had been the salvation of this boy.

There was an eager movement by the door as a telegraph boy appeared through the darkness. The piece of pink paper was handed silently from one to the other. It bore only three words : "Worse. No hope."

Sister Mary went swiftly back to her ward, and entering her own room, threw herself on her knees, and prayed passionately : "Not Lolo, O Lord ! O Lord, leave us Lolo !"

Of all the students Sister Mary had ever known, none had given greater promise than Lolo. His was that splendid skill, strength, and gentleness which make a perfect surgeon ; and his wondrous power of winning love and confidence, was the gift of one in a million. Could not death have been satisfied with another, instead of snatching away their dearest and their best, just as his rare faculties were beginning to develop ?

Lolo ; beloved of all ; the little children's friend.

A knock at the door recalled Sister Mary to her duties, and she rose and went out into the ward, to see that all her small charges were made comfortable for the night. As she reached each nurse, she told these sad news in a low tone, and passed on, leaving glistening eyes and trembling lips behind her. These women had learnt self-control in a stern school ; but they were none the less sympathetic and tender-hearted, because they could restrain their most powerful emotions.

The lights were lowered and the small patients lay quiet in their cribs ; everything was straight for the night. Sister Mary stood at the far end of the long, dim ward, and in a low voice, distinctly heard in the remotest corner, said : "Children, close your eyes and clasp your hands ; we are going to pray for Mr. Lolo, who is very ill."

Then she knelt down and prayed.

At that moment the spirit of Lolo departed for ever from earth.

Sometimes you may hear the doctors, nurses, or students, mention in low, loving tones, some past good deed done by Mr. Gerard Lorrimer. But the name of "Lolo" is never spoken, though never forgotten. Deep in many hearts it lies, sanctifying the hardest labour by its association, and breathing patience and power into many a much-tried soul.

ACROSS THE SILVER STREAK.

" 'THEY order,' said I, 'this matter better in France'—'You have been in France' said my gentleman, turning quick upon me, with the most civil triumph in the world. 'Strange,' quoth I, debating the matter with myself, 'that one-and-twenty miles' sailing, for 'tis absolutely no further from Dover to Calais, should give a man these rights—I'll look into them.'"

Readers of Sterne will remember this passage, which opens "The Sentimental Traveller." In his time, to cross the "Silver Streak" was indeed an achievement to be proud of, and of which comparatively few, belonging almost exclusively to the wealthier classes, could boast. National animosity, fostered by almost continuous warfare, which led us to regard France as our natural enemy ; the high cost of travelling ; restricted knowledge of the French language, together with the

horrors of a sea passage in small sailing vessels, which took three or four times longer to accomplish the passage than the superb craft of the present day, combined to make the journey a serious undertaking.

But all this is changed. Now we talk of a trip to Paris with almost as much "sang froid" as of a run down to Brighton, and the number of persons who undertake it increases year by year; while Dover, though eternally the shortest, is no longer the one indispensable route.

Some very interesting statistics have lately been published, showing the extraordinary growth of the Continental passenger traffic between Dover and Calais since 1854. The total for last year was two hundred and fifteen thousand nine hundred and eighty-four, and for eight months in the present year one hundred and sixty thousand seven hundred and eighty-two. During the corresponding period of the present year the traffic *via* Folkestone and Boulogne was seventy-eight thousand four hundred and ninety-eight.

Probably, in no other quarter of the globe does a journey of twenty-one miles introduce the traveller to so complete a change as from Dover to Calais. In the case of countries whose frontiers are co-terminous, there is an assimilation of language and manners where the territories unite, and divergence is only strikingly noticeable as we advance. But, no sooner have we landed at Calais, than we seem to be in another world, as distinct from that which we left behind at Dover as could well be imagined.

Centuries of close and active association between the two ports have failed to affect appreciably the character of either. Dover is as characteristic an English town as any in the Kingdom, without a trace of French influence. There are some things it might profitably learn from its next-door neighbour; but it proudly refuses to be taught. An acquaintance of mine from beyond the Tweed said he expected to find French as commonly spoken in Dover as English; which was on a par with my own youthful anticipations of a visit to Scotland, where I imagined I should find everybody wearing the kilt. As a fact, a knowledge of that elegant language is very little more general in Dover than in other towns, and is principally confined to those whose avocations bring them into daily contact with Frenchmen. A scheme is on foot to establish a French Club, where that language alone should be spoken.

Calais — notwithstanding the considerable English colony of lace-makers from Nottingham, in the suburb of St. Pierre — is a typical French town, with a mediæval air that carries the imagination back to the days when it was an English possession, and revives a host of historic memories. To me it seems haunted by the ghosts of Edward the First and his good Queen, the Black Prince, Harry the Fifth, and others whose names are renowned in story; including Queen Mary, who is said to have been broken-hearted at its final loss to the English Crown.

Many of the houses are very old; for instance, Dessein's Hotel, which the genius of Sterne has invested with a peculiar interest, and a room in which is designated in his honour the "Sterne chambre;" though whether it was ever occupied by him is perhaps open to doubt. But whether that be so or not, it is impossible not to feel attracted towards a building which was the scene of those beautiful creations of the fancy: "The Monk," "The Snuff-box," and "The Fair Lady of Brussels," who "wore a character of distress."

Imagination almost seeks to trace "Alas, poor Yorick!" engraven upon the portals of its ancient and venerable front. The sceptre has departed since railways and steamboats have superseded the less convenient, but more picturesque, modes of travel. The old courtyard, with its massive iron gates, still exists; but the "magasin des chaises," with its motley assortment of "désobligeants" and "vis à-vis," on hire for the journey to Paris, or the grand tour to Rome, has long ceased to form a feature of the establishment. "Milords Anglais" no longer halt there to make arrangements, but are whirled away at once to Paris in some sort of "convenance de luxe;" nor need they be detained even by stress of weather, for the electric telegraph practically enables them to choose their own time for crossing. But, though shorn of its glory, it is yet the principal hotel in the town, corresponding to the Lord Warden at Dover; and the present proprietor is the lineal descendant of the original M. Dessein by whom it was founded.

Apart from historic interest, Calais is not a prepossessing town, and the traveller, who wishes to break the journey to Paris, would probably find more to attract at Boulogne, or at Amiens.

Facing the white cliffs of Dover, are those of Cape Grinez, plainly visible on any clear day to the naked eye — so near,

and yet so far. How little does the narrow streak, poetically described as silver, which has been spanned in almost every conceivable way, measure the moral gulf between the two nations whom it divides! Language, character, manners, modes of living, all as distinct as though they belonged to different planets. No wonder their histories have been chronicles of antagonism. On the Sabbath, especially, the contrast is most suggestive. While in Dover it is being kept "de rigueur," as regards external indications of reverence, no secular sounds being heard save those proceeding from military bands, playing their regiments to church, on the other side of the "street" the people are plunged in a vortex of pleasure, and everything wears the aspect of a fair. So close is the juxtaposition that one may literally, in the short space of an hour, "look on this picture and on that." The people of Calais are said to detest the Dover Sabbath, and cannot, in fact, be induced by cheap fares to visit it in any considerable numbers on that day. The closed shops, the absence of amusements, the general air of gloom, and repellent aspect of the inhabitants at the slightest exhibition of hilarity, fill them with amazement and disgust. One of them remarked to me, "You call this your day of rest, to me it looks like a day of mourning."

Dover is perhaps an exceptionally austere town, an obligation assumed in virtue of its proud and time-honoured position as guardian of the Straits.

The curious part of the circumstance is that we regard it as proof of our superior civilisation, and the French as evidence of our barbarism. Which is right?

Of the two towns, Calais is the more enterprising and populous, having much more to show in the way of industries and shipping; Dover the more attractive and agreeable as a place of residence.

It is, indeed, suggestive of comment, that Dover, though well situated and adapted to be a great port, is really very badly provided, and far inferior in the volume of its trade to Calais, which has fewer natural advantages. Even as regards the industry of fishing, our Gallic neighbours would appear to be much more enterprising, the number of boats engaged in the trade from Calais, Dunkerque, and Boulogne, far exceeding that from the opposite English ports of Dover, Ramsgate, and Folkestone.

I am afraid it must be added, in view of

the constantly recurring complaints, that the Frenchmen are much less scrupulous as to the legal limits and moral obligations involved; the charges being invariably made against, not by, them. This state of things is not quite in keeping with our general character for maritime supremacy, and we might reasonably expect the South Coast ports, and the premier Cinque Port of Dover in particular, whose fishing fleet is comparatively insignificant, to do better. It is not creditable in these hard times, that the harvest of the sea in the neighbourhood of the Straits should mainly be reaped by Frenchmen, and that the port of Dover should practically serve their interests more than that of our own countrymen. That this is so is abundantly evident during the prevalence of stormy weather, when Dover Harbour is crowded with French fishing smacks, which have been unable to make their own ports.

From the picturesque point of view, the advantage is all on the side of Dover. There is nothing on the other side to compare with the stately aspect of Shakespeare's Cliff, whose tall, white front glistens in the sunshine like some Alpine's snowy crest; the wild beauty of the Warren; or the imposing boldness of the fortified heights, crowned by the proud Castle, whose gray battlements have looked down upon so many moving incidents in the history of the past. What a world of emotions those objects have inspired among successive generations of travellers, who, satiated with the gaiety and splendour of foreign scenes, have burned with impatience to reach that "Dear Old England," absence from which had served only to make the heart grow fonder!

POOR FOLK.

A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

By the Author of "David Ward," "The Story of a Sorrow,"
"A Dreadful Miscalculation," etc. etc.

CHAPTER VI

GET out the ploughs? What did Taylor mean? Gordon had not time to deliberate, or did not allow himself time, with that red glow steadily broadening in the east. He had now been long enough in the colony to realise what a Bush fire meant, with the flames swinging themselves from tree to tree, and their hungry tongues licking the short stubble left from the harvest or the ripened crop which was ready for the sickle, clasping the dwelling-

house, too, perhaps in its fiery embrace, and leaving it a blackened heap of ashes.

And a Bush fire was nearing them now, bearing possible ruin on its wings for master.

But not if Gordon could help it! His heart pulsated as though it would leap from his breast; and he burst like an avalanche into the room where Smith and Jenkins were asleep.

"The Bush is on fire," he cried, shaking them alternately, "and master says we are to get out the ploughs."

Smith sat up in bed, his mouth wide open, his eyes starting.

Jenkins rubbed his face sleepily.

"The ploughs!" he said; "ay, to plough down the grass and stubble."

After his first moment of bewilderment, Smith rolled himself slowly to the floor and began to dress.

"What must I do first? Shall I loose the cattle?"

"What would you loose the cattle for?" he answered surlily. "We'll save the place and the cattle too."

He had looked out on the broadening sheet of flame and saw that the fire was still some miles off; but, as a wind had risen, and was blowing steadily from the region of the fire, he recognised the greatness of the danger.

"If you want to do something, go and yoke the horses to the ploughs," he said after a pause.

When Gordon came out to the yard again Taylor was there, his hands in his pockets, his white face warmed a little by the glow in the sky.

"It is ruin," he said in a shaken voice, turning to the boy.

"No, it isn't," Gordon answered cheerily, "not if we can hinder it. Will you help me to yoke the ploughs?"

"I don't think it's much use," he answered apathetically.

"We shall see."

There were two ploughs in good condition on the place, and one that had received an injury and been temporarily laid aside; but this, too, was pressed into service. The oxen could draw it somehow or other, and work for Taylor was imperatively necessary.

The principal farm-work for the year was over; but a couple of black fellows still loitered about the place, and these had joined the others, and were watching the spreading flame with wild eyes, like restive horses ready to bolt.

"What shall I do now?" Gordon asked, as the three teams stood ready.

"There is nothing you can do," Taylor answered slowly; then, with a glance towards the river in the distance, "I don't think we need fear for our lives, the river can be reached at the worst; but as to all I have in the world, I consider that quite lost."

"Where shall we put in the ploughs?" Smith asked, his voice shaking a little.

"Make a small circle round the house; we shall not have time to compass much before the fire is on us."

"I don't mean to lose the hay," Jenkins answered doggedly, and headed the horses away to a distance beyond it.

The hay was worth many hundred pounds, and stood in half-a-dozen magnificent pikes on the windward side of the house. That gave Gordon an idea. Aided by the terrified black fellows, who kept casting wild glances towards the river, he collected every bucket and tub about the place and filled them with water from the pump; then he gathered all the rugs, blankets, horse-cloths, and sheets of tarpaulin that could be found and saturated them thoroughly.

"What dat for?" one of the blacks asked, with a ghastly grin composed of terror and amusement.

"You'll see. Fetch me the long ladder."

As Black Davy did not very well know where the long ladder was to be found, Gordon got it himself, and resting it against the roof, saturated the building, which was dry as tinder, with the buckets of water that were handed up to him. Douche, douche, douche! went torrents everywhere, while Black Johnnie toiled at the pump, and Davy passed the water up to Gordon. Never, even in a hurricane time, had the whole premises been so drenched.

"Now for the hay," Gordon said, when stables, granary, and cowhouses stood dejectedly dripping in the grey light of dawn.

"Water spoil hay," one of the black fellows suggested, dubiously scratching his curly head.

"I'm not going to soak it," Gordon answered with a nervous laugh, born of his excitement; "I'm only going to cover it with wet blankets on the side nearest the fire, so that, if any bits of burning stuff should touch them, they may still have a chance."

"White fellow berry smart fellow," the black said admiringly.

The hay was covered as far as the cloths extended, more water was dashed over the houses, and then, providing himself and each of the blacks with a long hay-fork, Gordon took his stand on the side nearest the fire, and not a moment too soon, for the flames were approaching with giant strides.

Miles of timber had been rung the previous year for burning, and was now as dry as tinder, and the fierce wind blew the light messmate bark long distances ahead, so that showers of burning wood had already fired fences, crops, and houses that would have been safe in an ordinary brush-wood fire.

"Black fellows run berry soon," the two natives said, as they looked at each other with dismal countenances.

Now was seen the utility of Gordon's precautions. As the burning bark was carried over the rapidly widening circle which the ploughs were tracing to be flung on the hay or the house-tops, Gordon dislodged it from the wet cloths or the smoking roofs with his long fork, and stamped the life out of it under his thick boots. And the blacks, when they saw his meaning, stood to him manfully, detecting with their keen eyes a flying scout and its destination long before it had alighted, and attacking it with the glee of children.

Meantime the solid wall of flame had neared the barrier of upturned earth, a barrier now about twenty-five feet wide, and the sight it offered was magnificent.

In front the flames were like the solid phalanx of a demon army, moving forward with swift and deadly malignity, and already raising a chorus of triumph to the dark sky. In the distance the wild devastation had abated a little: but the incandescent landscape glowed with the sullen triumph of accomplished ruin, while the dome of the sky reflected it. Many a devastated homestead marked its riotous course; many an impoverished family had given their little all to speed its progress.

"Now we have done all in our power," Taylor said, as he led back the steaming oxen into the farm-yard, and having unhitched them, mechanically conducted them to their stalls; but he did not fasten them up—they, too, should have a chance for life if the worst came to the worst. The cattle in the sheds, the pigs in the styes, were giving voice to their terror, and that seemed to accentuate the anguish of the hour.

Taylor had seated himself apathetically on the doorstep, with his haggard eyes dully fixed on the approaching enemy.

Overhead the forest birds were screaming wildly as they flew in thousands towards the river, while savage woodland creatures ventured timidly within the charmed circle traced by the ploughs. Under the paralysing influence of terror, the very polecats had grown tame.

And still Gordon and the two black fellows stood their ground, while the hot embers fell in showers around them, and the air that breathed over them was like blasts from a furnace-fire. Smith and Jenkins had seated themselves despairingly beside their master. There was nothing more for them to do, and that made endurance worse.

But when, in spite of Gordon's efforts, one of the hay pikes caught fire, then both master and men were galvanised into life.

There is nothing that burns so resolutely as hay, nothing that catches fire so easily. Perhaps Gordon had abated his watchfulness a little, for the flames were to right and left of them now, and outside the charmed circle, and the burning bark was being borne further afield, when suddenly a solid wedge of flame dropped on the hay itself, a foot or so beyond the wet covering.

Instantaneously the black fellows flung away their forks, and fled with cries of dismay. For an instant no one knew what to do. Taylor stood at a distance wringing his hands. His wheat and oats were lost already, must his hay and the homestead go next?

To a farmer, his crops and cattle are part of his very life: money will not replace them, and the farm goes to ruin without them. To most men, the cattle in the stalls, the grain in the fields or on the threshing floor, represent the toil and economy, and hopes of an entire year. To Taylor Wonga Farm represented the labour of his lifetime. What mattered the money in the bank? Would it keep him from breaking his heart, if everything that was close at hand, and personal, and vital were lost?

But Gordon had all his wits about him. For a moment the disaster, against which he had thought himself secure, staggered him, but he had a quick brain to think. The burning hay could not be saved, that was certain; for the side of the pike was already a glowing solid mass of fire. But to prevent it spreading was the one essential. With pitchfork and gigantic hay knives the men tore and cut at the un-

touched side of the pike, carrying the rescued hay bodily to a distance; about one-half they left to burn, while they stood over it shepherding it. And by-and-by the danger passed. The flames died down into a heap of shining, silky dust, while the forest fire swept onward towards the river, and extinguished itself there.

"I shall never forget how true you have all shown yourselves," Taylor said in a choked voice; "but," turning to Gordon, "it is to you that I owe everything that is left."

And for once, Smith and Jenkins did not protest, even to their own hearts.

Taylor went to his room and closed himself in there. He felt prostrated, and he wanted to be alone; while the three he left behind him sat on the doorstep discussing the past danger in all its bearings.

"You're a plucky one, I will say that for you," Smith said to Gordon approvingly; while Jenkins, induced thereto by Smith's warmth, shook hands with him silently. The two men made an unspoken truce with the boy there and then, and kept it thenceforward as well as they could. In that supreme trial they knew they had acquitted themselves heroically, and so were ready to treat generously a greater than themselves.

But commonplace duties have to be performed even after great labours, and Gordon was the first to remember that the cattle in the stalls needed seeing after, and that they were themselves hungry as well as very weary.

When the breakfast was cooked and eaten, the animals fed, and other morning duties performed, then for the first time the boy's nervous tension relaxed, and, throwing himself on his hard stretcher, he fell into the deep sleep of utter exhaustion, while the midday sun looked down on the marred and devastated landscape, through the veil of smoke left by the fire.

It is not in the shipwreck and the strife
We feel benumbed, and wish to be no more;
But in the after-silence on the shore,
When all is lost, except a little life.

Twenty-four hours had elapsed at Wonga Farm since the disaster; but it was only now, when fatigue of body had given place to sickness of heart, that they were all able to realise what had happened.

The homestead was intact, and a few acres of land around it; and the cattle housed on the place were safe, and happily enough hay to feed them during the

winter; but what of the stock in the remote meadows? What of the hundreds of sheep that in themselves had been worth a little fortune but a day ago? The piece of ground that had been rescued was like an oasis in a black desert of ashes. When Taylor looked forth on the horrible waste, extending for miles around, he felt as if the desolation would kill him.

Of course things had been as bad, though in another way, once, before even the bit of soil he stood on had been reclaimed from the Bush; but he had been young then and full of strength and energy, with only Nature to contend against; now it was against something worse, against something unnatural and monstrous—against the fire fiend which had broken loose and overwhelmed him.

He moved aimlessly and restlessly about the house all day, speaking to no one. In the evening he wandered forth, taking his way aimlessly across the blackened stretch of ground extending between the farmhouse and the river. Desolation everywhere, not a living thing but himself stirring in earth or sky.

Along the bank of the river carcasses of cattle lay strewn—cattle marked with his own and other brands; in the water, mingled with charred wood and other débris, dead sheep floated, their thick wool matted with blackened embers.

"The poor, innocent beasties!" he thought, his throat swelling. He was not thankful for his saved life, nor for the possessions still left to him, he was rebellious because of all he had lost.

Waste everywhere—before, behind, and around him; desolation so dead that not a wombat nor an opossum stirred, nor a sound, save the sullen rushing of the river, broke the silence. He looked round him despairingly, and hot, bitter tears rose in his eyes. After a long, laborious lifetime, after all his efforts and patience, this was hard.

"Better to have been idle and wasteful, than to have toiled and saved for this," he thought. And then, suddenly, a shrill cry pierced the stillness, and a little child sped towards him along the bank of the river—a girl of five or six, with her clothes almost burned from her person, and her fair hair singed off close to her head.

"Oh, sir," she cried, running to Taylor and clutching him.

"What is it, dear?" looking down on the pretty face that was blurred and marred with weeping.

"It is father; he is lying over there, so ill," pointing into the distance.

"I don't see him, dear," Taylor answered, puzzled.

"But he is there," impatiently, "a black heap on the other black heaps; don't you see?"

"You had better take me to him," he said, offering her his hand.

"We were burned out," she told him with a sob, as they moved forward. "We ran half the night, to get away from the fire, and we could not bring anything with us, not mother's picture, nor my best frock, nor anything; and, when the flames were coming nearer and nearer to us, father set fire to the wood in front. Oh, it was terrible, as if he wanted to make things worse; but he said no, because his fire might clear enough ground for us to stand on, before the big fire overtook us. And so it did, and we got in among the dying embers just where the big fire shut us in, as if we were in a cage. The hot cinders burned my feet, and then father lifted me to his shoulder. I asked him if they did not burn him, too; but he said his boots were thick. That was to keep me from worrying, you know," looking up at Taylor, while the tears rolled over her round, baby cheeks, "for I know now he was being burned all the time. He wanted to get to a place called Wonga Farm; but it was twenty miles away, and, when the fire ran so fast, he thought Wonga Farm would be burned up too. As soon as the cinders cooled a little, we sat down, and then I fell asleep. I could not help it, I was so tired, and when I awoke I was so hot and thirsty I felt as if I should die. Father looked dreadful ill; but he said it didn't matter, we must get to the river. I would not let him carry me any more, and we got along somehow. When I had had a drink I felt better, but he grew worse, and—but you shall see."

She darted forward to what looked like a charred, twisted log lying on the sand of the river, and flung her arms round it.

The stranger had been lying on his face, he turned now, laboriously, on his side, and looked at Taylor. His face was horribly burned and seamed, and his scorched clothing permitted glimpses of the reddened skin on his chest and arms.

"I am afraid you are in great pain," Taylor said kindly.

"Ay, burned up, as well as burned out; look at my feet!"

Taylor did so, and shuddered. The man had endeavoured to take off his boots, and the skin and flesh had come with them in several places, leaving the muscles visible.

"Oh, poor fellow!" Taylor cried with intense sympathy.

"Ay, it is pretty bad; but I don't mind so much since I have found some one to look after the little 'un." Then, apathetically, as though his pain were of no consequence. "Did you lose much by the fire?"

An hour before, Taylor would have answered in despair: "I have lost almost everything"; but looking at the wreck before him, he could not help feeling that he had been mercifully dealt with. "I have lost a good deal," he answered, "but I am not ruined."

"I am glad of that. I hadn't much, but I lost it all; had to leave even the trifle of money hidden in the floor of the shanty, and haven't saved my life neither, nor anything but the little 'un."

"You must not lose heart," Taylor said hopefully. "I shall have you carried to my house, and you will be well looked after there."

"Tisn't any good, stranger, though I shall be glad of a roof to die under. Standing an hour in a furnace, while the flesh is roasting off your bones, and then walking miles and miles with feet like that, don't help a man; but I don't complain a bit, since you have turned up to look after the little 'un." Then after a pause, languidly, "You will want a name to call her by. I am Dick Rayne, and she's my daughter Janet."

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE SQUIRE AND THE COLONEL.

HIDDEN and very remote among the Surrey hills; little haunted by tourists, except of the artist kind; approached by narrow and intricate lanes, which wind between deep banks among the woods, and climb up and down break-neck hills from one valley to another, lies Red Towers, the old house belonging to Paul Romaine.

It is six miles from the station, and two from its parish church and the village of Holm; but it is not quite lonely, for it stands on the edge of a clearing in the woods—a small common, crossed by sandy roads, which come up here into the light, on the high ground, before plunging down into shadows and hollows again. On the common there are a few low stone cottages, their gardens almost invaded by bracken and heather, and sheltered by tall pines, the advance-guard of the wood.

At one corner of the common stands the little new house that was built for Canon Percival; at the other end, nearly opposite the gate of Red Towers, is the quaint old cottage where Colonel Ward lived for many years. Red Towers itself cannot be seen from the common, being hidden in depths of wood; but it is the great house of the place.

Houses, cottages, woods, all those sandy, unprofitable tracts of wild ground, belong to Paul Romaine. He is landlord and lord of the manor there, with a power and independence that many greater landlords

might envy. His forefathers have been in the same position for three hundred years.

One Sunday afternoon in September, a few years ago, Colonel Ward and Mr. Romaine and six or seven dogs were coming back from a walk together. The two men were as different from each other as intimate friends could be. Colonel Ward was sixty; short, grey, and close-cropped; he was very upright and soldier-like, with blue, clear-seeing eyes, and he was not at all afraid of using his cane on dogs or children, who, however, invariably made friends with him.

Paul Romaine, who was the Colonel's friend by right of inheritance, in succession to his father, was a tall young fellow of three-and-twenty, so quiet in look and manner as to give outsiders no idea of the talents that had taken a First Class a few weeks before. He strolled along, alouching carelessly, by the Colonel's side; his eyes looked half asleep; his dark face, rather thin and delicately cut, expressed nothing but a sort of indifferent content. Paul was not a great talker, he let the Colonel talk, and knew how to listen—"which is not so easy as one thinks, and which no stupid man was ever capable of."

They came up out of the dark, soft paths, out of the deep silence of the fir-wood, a real thing that day, for not the faintest wind was stirring. They crossed the common among dying heather and great yellow fronds of bracken, and red black-berry brambles flung across the narrow paths that children and dogs had made. Opposite them, the chimneys of Canon Percival's house stood up against a clear sky and lower levels of wood, not fir-wood there, but masses of varied leaves beginning to change.

Colonel Ward flourished his stick towards the chimneys.

"Why did your father do that, Paul?" he said. "Spoilt the place, spoilt the common, and all for nothing. They never come here, and perhaps it is as well they shouldn't. But it brings interlopers—artists, and all kinds of rubbish. We have had horrid people there this summer—vulgar, unpleasant people. Yes, Mrs. Percival liked it at first, but she is tired of it now."

"They are coming next month," said Paul.

"No! Are they?" exclaimed the Colonel, in a voice of the greatest delight.

"As soon as his residence is over. What's-his-name is going back to India."

"That's a good thing," said Colonel Ward. "You don't like him, Paul, do you?"

"We don't get on much," said Paul.

"I bet you don't. The most conceited puppy I ever met—correcting me about things I knew before he was born. People tell me all young fellows are like that, but I don't believe them. Can't imagine how the Canon can stand such an ass in the house; but he never had much sense."

Paul laughed. "But you're singular, you know," he said. "Most people like Vincent about there. He's a great swell in the Close."

"Ah! the Close!" said Colonel Ward wickedly. "Yes, I daresay he suits them well; they make a fine hero of him."

"Well, they are all very jolly," said Paul in his lazy way.

They were now walking side by side along the road that led to their two houses, past the shady garden of the post-office, and one or two other cottages. The Colonel's eyes were everywhere; Paul looked absently straight before him.

"Don't go in too much for these clerical people," said the Colonel. "Your father was the finest man that ever lived, and my greatest friend, but I never could understand his friendship for old Percival. And not giving him up, too, when he married the woman we were all in love with. However, your father was not so far gone as I was, Paul—of course not—your dear mother soon consoled him. For my part, I never could forgive Percival."

"You don't seem revengeful," said Paul. It seemed necessary to say something, though he knew all this by heart, having heard the whole story from Colonel Ward a hundred times before.

"I'm civilised, of course; I can't show my feelings," said the Colonel. "Besides, Mrs. Percival must always be her old self to me; and she knows it. She knows she can count upon me. I don't believe in being faithless to old friends, Paul."

"Well, my father and the Canon were friends at school."

"Ah, well, your father was right, of course. But Percival was never good enough for him. A hollow sort of chap; and those men do more harm than good, especially when they go into the Church, which ought to keep up its character. No; I never cared for your seeing so much of Percival."

"I couldn't help it, as he was my guardian," said Paul, "and they have always been awfully good to me."

"What a strange thing that was, now!" said Colonel Ward. "As if one guardian was not enough for a fellow. I could have managed you and your affairs well enough by myself, and I should have arranged things rather differently. You are a fine fellow, no doubt, with your degree, and so on; but in my opinion you have studied too much. A man with property, like you, has something to think of besides the classics. Everything here might have gone to the dogs, in the two years since you were of age, while you were reading as if your life depended on it. All Percival's doing: your father would not have cared for all that."

"But things have not gone to the dogs, thanks to you."

"No thanks at all. I happened to be living here; I kept my eyes open, and saw that people did their duty. By-the-by, you ought not to keep that old fellow at the post-office. He is a lazy old scoundrel. His wife does all the work, and she is a tremendous gossip. I don't approve of them."

"They have been here such a long time," said Paul.

Colonel Ward came to a stand at his own gate, and the dogs thronged round him; they were all his dogs, a family of Clumber spaniels, except Paul's little rough terrier, who jumped up at his master's hand, proud of belonging to him.

A low dark arch over the gate led into Colonel Ward's garden; the windows of his house peeped out with difficulty under masses of ivy and Virginia creeper, which hung over the porch, so that a tall man had to stoop to go in. The smooth turf of the garden was all bordered with brilliant

flowers; it was a charming little place in summer—all the year round, its master thought.

He stood among his dogs and looked at Paul with bright impatient eyes. He loved Paul; but how his friend, Sir Paul Romaine, K.C.B., the distinguished, dashing cavalry soldier, who, next to Mrs. Percival, had usurped the enthusiasm of his life, came to have a son like this, must always be a mystery. He was haunted by a fear that Paul might choose to be a clergyman, or might go in for science of some kind, or take to composing music, or writing books; he believed him to be capable of anything of this kind. Not that he did not respect these occupations, especially the first of them, for he was a good and a clever man in his way; but as Paul could not, or would not, be a soldier, he thought that Providence must mean him to be a landlord and a politician. He was terribly afraid that Paul would turn into an oddity, an old bachelor like himself; and in objecting to Paul's intimacy with the Percivals, he forgot that they in their commonplace world of gossip, and fashion, and tennis, were a strong influence the other way.

"How are you going to learn to manage your tenants, I wonder!" he said, and he looked hard at the young Squire standing in the middle of the road. "We shall soon have all the bad characters in the country settled on Holm Common."

"There wouldn't be room for them, unless I built more cottages," said Paul.

The Colonel swung his stick and laughed.

"There's only one hope for you, Paul," he said. "You're young, to be sure, to talk about it—but you must marry a sensible woman."

Paul made no direct answer to this. He had turned half away, playing with Scamp, who was impatient to be moving off again; and Colonel Ward did not see his smile or the light that suddenly woke in his eyes. Perhaps he was not so young as his old friend thought, after all.

"I say, Colonel, will you come and dine with me to-night?"

"All right. Nobody else?"

"No, nobody else," said Paul; and then the Colonel with his dogs dived into his little dark den, and Paul and Scamp went off at a great pace to their abode in the woods.

When the two friends met again, three hours later, Colonel Ward looked the picture of cheerful smartness, while Paul

was flushed and tired. He had been to church, and, finding that the organist was away on his holiday, he had put on a surplice and played the organ, as he used to do in more boyish days. After service, he went on playing for twenty minutes or more; a few people lingered in and near the church to listen, for the grand strains of a wedding or triumphal march—which yet could be traced to no known composer—echoed in the high roof and rolled out through open doors and windows into the quiet churchyard, with its yew trees, down to the valley where other people were slowly walking home.

The Vicar, a shy young man, who always found Paul hard to get on with, came up to him afterwards at the church door, in the twilight, and asked him if that music came from the mountains; for Paul had been in Switzerland nearly all the summer, almost ever since he left Oxford.

"No," said Paul; "it came from Wooborough."

"Ah! from the Cathedral!" said the Vicar, thinking he had made a mistake; and Paul did not correct him further.

The establishment at Red Towers was small and military. Indoors, Sabin ruled. He, in former years, had been Sir Paul's soldier-servant. Ford, the groom, a very solemn fellow, had belonged to the same regiment. Mrs. Sabin was housekeeper and cook, with two maids under her. Out of doors there were two or three gardeners, one of whom had been a soldier. The house had never been let since Sir Paul's death, seven years ago, but had been kept in splendid order by these servants, under Colonel Ward's vigilant eye. Mr. Bailey, the agent, sometimes came down from London; and Canon and Mrs. Percival walked about agreeably, and enjoyed the garden and the woods when they were at their little house hard by. The young master was there sometimes, too. He was always a solitary boy, with a taste for moping about at home, which his guardian's wife struggled against as much as she could. And she succeeded in getting him away a great deal, for Paul, like most other people, was very fond of her.

The rooms at Red Towers were large and rather gloomy, being furnished heavily and in dark colours. The whole effect was dark, beginning with the black oak window frames; and there was nothing modern in the house at all. The Romaines had never lived there much; they were nearly always

soldiers, and their wives generally did not like the place. The present house had been built by one of them about the time of James the Second. It was the sort of place that wanted large families, dogs, games, cheerfulness. The rustling of the woods and their weird cries and noises had always been rather terrible to anxious women waiting for news from battle-fields.

The rooms at Red Towers opened chiefly into each other, and Mrs. Sabin very often kept the shutters closed for weeks together; she thought light was not good for the fine old pictures and the beautiful china. Now and then she condescended to show these treasures to some intelligent and fascinating tourist; but very seldom. Colonel Ward never failed to hear of these exhibitions, and they made him angry.

When the Squire was at home, all the rooms were open, and carefully arranged. He could spend as much time as he liked among his forefathers and their possessions; and sometimes, in fact, he would stroll through the room with his hands in his pockets, looking up at the pictures as if he wished they could talk to him.

But he lived chiefly in a small room near the entrance, close to the square tower which contained the hall and staircase. This room had two windows, one in the angle by the tower, looking out on a corner of red wall and the woods beyond it, the other looking on a wide sheltered lawn with rose-beds and cedar-trees. The windows were near the ground, and Paul, with his long legs, could jump out easily. The walls of his room were covered with heavy bookcases, now full of modern books, which had arrived that summer in large cases from Oxford. Colonel Ward had unpacked and settled them with his own hands while Paul was abroad, sending away the old ones into the much less literary room, which was called the library. There was a piano in a corner, and over the chimney-piece were two small portraits of Paul's father and mother when they were young. In a velvet frame underneath hung a few miniatures, and Sir Paul's medals; Mrs. Percival had arranged that frame for the young man at Oxford. Above the portraits, hung Sir Paul's sword; and on the black carved mantel-piece were his travelling clock and a few other things which had belonged to him. Paul's peaceful propensities did not mean any want of pride in his father.

Sabin would have thought it much more correct that his master and Colonel Ward

should dine in the large dining-room. But Paul said, "No, in the study"; so into the study Sabin brought his fine old plate, his Worcester china, his best wine, and waited on the two friends with a beaming benevolence which made the nervous Colonel glance at him severely.

After dinner, when Sabin was gone, Paul became very silent and dreamy; even Scamp could hardly catch his attention. At last the Colonel, who was smoking and talking serenely, noticed his host's absence of mind, and fixed his eyes upon him in a momentary anxiety. Paul always looked young, for he wore no hair on his face; but that evening he looked like a boy of eighteen. He looked very handsome, too; eyelids drooping a little over dark eyes like his mother's, and faintly smiling, some new life lighting up the dreams which had taken hold of him. Suddenly, as the Colonel stared at him curiously—but quite unaware of that—he looked up and said: "Colonel, you were saying something this afternoon about marrying——"

Colonel Ward stared still more, in consternation now.

"What! My dear chap, take care what you are doing. Don't be in a hurry, whatever you do!"

"No," said Paul, "I have not been in a hurry. Do you mind our going outside, and talking about it? This room is so fearfully hot."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

THE name January was given by the Romans to this month in honour of their god Janus, the deity who was supposed to govern the gates and avenues. In this character he was depicted holding a key in his right hand and a rod in his left, to symbolise his opening and ruling the year. Sometimes he was also shown bearing the number three hundred in one hand and sixty-five in the other; while at other times he was represented with four heads, emblematical of looking at the four seasons of the year; and again with two heads, as being acquainted with past and future events. The Saxons called the month Wolf Monath, because wolves, driven by hunger, were wont to prowl about and attack even men in their desire for food. They also gave it the name of *Æfter Yula*, or after Christmas, and depicted it by a

man with faggots and a woodman's axe, shaking and blowing his fingers. January was introduced into the year by Numa Pompilius, the year among the Romans previously beginning with March. This Emperor also added two other months to the year.

January is more marked than any other month in the year for a variety of days connected with old superstitions, traditions, or curious observances. It was also a particularly unlucky month, its very first day being a "dies mala." In a manuscript calendar of the time of Henry the Sixth, the following days are set down as extremely dangerous: first, second, fourth, fifth, seventh, tenth, fifteenth; and in another calendar, the seventeenth and nineteenth are added. We are told by an old poet that

By her who in this month is born,
No gem save garnets should be worn;
They will ensure her constancy,
True friendship, and fidelity.

The precious stone set down to be worn in this month, by all who can afford to indulge themselves in such luxuries, is the hyacinth, which had the power of warding off the attacks of evil spirits.

Though the shortest day has passed before January makes its appearance, we have abundant evidence of the truth of the old couplet, that

As the day lengthens
So the cold strengthens,

and we are often compelled to admit, much as we may like the month, that

The blackest month in all the year
Is the month of Janiveer,

and also to own that the ancient weather saw contains more than a mere germ of truth:

Janiveer
Freeze the pot upon the fier.

Amongst other meteorological proverbs associated with the premier month are:

If the grass grow in Janiveer,
It grows the waur for't all the year.

A January spring
Is worth naething.

Under water dearth,
Under snow bread.

March in Janiveer.
Janiveer in March I fear.

If January calends be summerly gay,
'Twill be winterly weather till the calends of May.

And last of all a Scotch proverb tells us that: "Winter comes not till after New Year, nor spring till after Saint Patrick's Day."

Before referring to New Year's Day, it may be well to state the meaning of Old and New Style, so frequently met with in ancient documents. From the seventh to the fourteenth centuries, the year began at Christmas; from the twelfth century by the Church, on the twenty-fifth of March; from the fourteenth century by civilians at the same time; in 1752, the New Style was introduced, and 1753 began on the first of January, since which time no change has been made.

New Year's Day in the long distant past was spent amongst the men in jollity and frolic, and by the women in carrying from door to door a bowl of spiced ale, called Wassail, which they offered to the residents of every house they stopped at. In return they received some trifling present.

In Scotland, the eve of the new year is known as Hogmanay and Singen E'en, and on this night friend visits friend, and generally "spend a night of it" together. The visitors and company make a point of not rising to separate until after the clock strikes twelve, when they immediately rise, clink glasses, drink healths, and with hearty hand-shakings, wish each other a mutual and happy new year. To the superstitious in the Highlands, it is of great moment which way the wind blows on Hogmanay:

If New Year's Eve night wind blow south,
It betokeneth warmth and growth;
If west, much milk, and fishes in the sea;
If north, much cold and storms there will be
If east, the trees will bear much fruit;
If north-east, flee it man and brute.

Opening the Bible on New Year's Day is another practice still common in some parts of Scotland, and much credit is attached thereto. It is generally set about on the morning before breakfast, as the ceremony must be performed fasting. The Bible is laid on the table unopened, and the parties who wish to consult it are then to open it in succession. They are not at liberty to choose any particular part of the book, but must open it at random. Whenever this is done, and wherever it may happen to be, the inquirer has to place his finger on any one of the chapters contained in the two open pages, but without any previous perusal. The chapter is then read aloud, and commented upon by the people assembled. It is believed that the good or ill-fortune, the happiness or misery of the consulting party during the coming year will be in some way or other described and foreshown by the contents of the chapter.

In small towns the children, dressed in

a variety of queer guises, perambulate the streets on New Year's Eve singing :

Hogmanay, trolloay,
Gie's o' your white bread,
And none o' your grey.

And, in other places, the following verse, which is much the same in effect :

Get up, good wife, and shake your feathers,
Dinna think that we are beggars,
We're only bairns out to play,
Rise up and gie's our hogmanay.

In obedience to this call they are each served with "hogmanay," which generally consists of cake or buns, but sometimes of coppers. Why the last day of the year was called Hogmanay is not easily explained ; but some say the word was applied to December as the holy month. The custom, like many another old custom, is dying out rapidly.

An old Scotch custom to secure good luck in the New Year, was as follows : One of the family goes to the village well at twelve o'clock on the last night of the year, draws water from it, plucks a little grass, throws it into the water which has been drawn, and carefully carries the water and grass home. This custom is not confined to the villages of any particular part, but extends over large tracts of the country. In the interior—at least in parts of it—grass is not thrown into the water that has been drawn. If the drawer of the water has cows, all the dairy utensils are washed with part of the water, and the remainder is given in drink to the cows. The cream of the cows of those who are in the habit of frequenting the well to draw water is thus secured to the midnight drawer. The custom goes by the name of "creaming the well," or in the vernacular, "rehmin' the wall."

The Romans made New Year's Day a complete holiday. The people went in throngs to Mount Tarpeia, where Janus had an altar. They wished one another good luck, and were very careful not to speak anything ill-natured or quarrelsome on that day.

In the North of England, within a comparatively recent period, such persons as followed their occupations on New Year's Day ran a great risk of having to ride the cowl-staff, or stang.

Less than a century ago in Cumberland and Westmoreland, it was quite common for people to assemble early in the morning with baskets and stangs, and whoever did not join them, whether inhabitant or stranger, was immediately mounted across

the stang and carried shoulder high to the next public-house, where sixpence was demanded for the liberation of the prisoner. Women were seized in the same way, and carried to the ale-house in swills, where they were fined a pint of beer each.

Dr. Drake observes that the ushering in of the New Year with rejoicings and good wishes was a custom observed during the sixteenth century with great regularity by all classes in this country, and it is said that the practice dates from the times of the early Romans. The festival of the New Year was certainly kept up by our Saxon ancestors with more than the ordinary jollity, and the interchange of presents was very common among our Norman Kings, and their successors, and nobility, though it seems under the Tudors and Stuarts to have been confined chiefly to the reception of gifts by the sovereign.

In Henry the Eighth's reign, honest old Latimer is said to have given to the King, instead of a purse of gold, a New Testament, with the leaf turned down at Hebrews xiii. 4.

Gloves were amongst the most common gifts to the clergy at New Year's tide, a small sum of money also being given with them. When Prynne visited Archbishop Laud in the Tower, the extraordinary pressing importunity of the great Churchman compelled him to accept a fair pair of gloves.

At Coventry on New Year's Day, it was formerly the custom to eat god-cakes—a kind of pie of triangular shape, filled with mince-meat.

A curious custom, known as Quaaltagh, is still partially observed in the Isle of Man. The person who first sweeps the floor on New Year's morning must begin to brush the dust from the door to the hearth, instead of, as usual, sweeping it to the door. It would be considered a most grievous affair if the latter were done, as the good fortune of the family would thereby be thought to be swept from home for the year. Nor must any light be taken out of the house, or a death would be certain to occur before the expiration of the ensuing twelve months. It is also thought an unlucky omen, if a female, or a light or red-haired person, chance to be the first visitor on the day.

"On New Year's Day," says Mr. William Henderson, in his "Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties," "much importance is attached to the first foot which crosses the threshold. That of a fair man is

luckier than that of a dark one; but alas for the chivalry of the North! should it be a woman's, some misfortune may certainly be looked for. The servant girls are desirous that their 'first foot' should be a lover, and sometimes they ensure it by admitting him as soon as the New Year is rung in. They arrange, too, that he should bring something with him into the house, for, as the Lincolnshire rhyme runs—

Take out and then take in,
Bad luck will begin;
Take in, then take out,
Good luck comes about.

A friend tells me that in the western part of the county of Durham, he has known a man to be specially retained as 'first foot,' or 'lucky bird' as they call him in Yorkshire, his guerdon being a glass of spirits; but it was not necessary that he should be a bachelor. The man took good care to be at the house by five o'clock in the morning, which ensured his being the earliest visitor. This custom prevails through all our northern counties. At Stamfordham, in Northumberland, the 'first foot' must be a bachelor. He generally brings in a shovelful of coals; but, unfortunately, whisky is coming into fashion as his offering. One inhabitant of the village, I scarcely know why, was considered a lucky 'first foot;' and he always went in that capacity to the blacksmith's house, hard by. One year some one else was by accident 'first foot.' This was considered an ill omen, and, accordingly, during the following hay harvest, the house was broken open and half-a-sovereign stolen. In some districts, however, special weight is attached to the 'first foot' being that of a person with a high arched instep, a foot that 'water runs under.' A flat-footed person would bring great ill-luck for the coming year. The possessor of the lucky, i.e. arched foot, whether male or female, will then be asked to come first to the house or to the rooms to waken the sleepers."

The form of greeting applied in many parts of the country on this day is:

I wish you a merry Christmas,
A happy New Year,
A pocket full of money
And a cellar full of beer.

This may constantly be heard shouted through the key-holes by lads and lasses early on the morning of New Year's Day. A slightly altered version of this is sung with much gusto by children in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

There is much visiting at this season throughout the North of England, and much hospitality in the matter of rich cake and wine; but the name applied to the practice in Northumberland is singular. They call it "fadging," or "eating fadge."

In the fourteenth century, makers of pins were only allowed to sell their commodity openly on the two first days of the year, and Court ladies and city dames flocked to the depots to buy them, having first been provided with the necessary funds by their husbands. In 1347, we read that one thousand two hundred pins were delivered from the Royal wardrobe for the use of the Princess Joan. Pins were pins in those days, and costing much money, were taken care of. It is from the fact that husbands allowed their wives so much money per year to purchase pins, that we get the common phrase, "pin money," which still remains, though the cause for its use has long since passed away.

In Germany they have a custom known as "jumping into the New Year." A little before twelve o'clock on the thirty-first of December, each person in the room stands upon his chair, holding a glass of wine in his hand, and as the clock strikes the hour of midnight they jump down, tinkle their glasses together, and drink in the New Year with good wishes, the one for the other.

In Norway, friends and acquaintances exchange calls and good wishes, a little table being placed in the corner of each reception room, on which refreshments are placed for the use of visitors.

There was one great drawback to the ancient observance of New Year's Day all over the world, in that it was carried on with much rioting and excessive drinking. This has happily died away, and only the good wishes, the visiting, and the exchange of presents has been retained—in short, the bad features of the past have been discarded, and the good continued.

REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE.

THERE is no need of any great explanation to recall the sensation excited, and the horror felt, when the news arrived (many years ago, now) of the massacre of a large party of English travellers, with their native guides—many said it was done by the native guides—in the north of Africa. The party had gone to what was called in Defoe's time, and since, the coast of Barbary, for sporting and general adventure;

of which latter item the poor fellows soon had a great deal too much.

Nothing definite was learned of the catastrophe. The Consuls were directed to make urgent representations to various rulers, and no doubt they did so; with about as much effect as was to have been expected. The fate of the sportsmen was, however, too clear, as some of their watches, fire-arms, and other belongings were found and identified in the possession of a certain dangerous tribe, who said they had purchased them from another tribe—still more dangerous, it appeared. Whether this was true or not could never be known. The matter made a sensation for a while, and then—a general election, or a railway accident, or a popular murder, succeeding—it was forgotten.

The relatives of the lost travellers naturally felt deeper and dwelt longer upon the tragedy than did the general public, and in one case, at least, the effect was fatal. Squire Vynes, of Marsh Coppice House, in a western county, died within three months of the news reaching England, for his only son, his only child—a bright, stalwart young fellow of three-and-twenty—had been of the party, and his loss broke the heart of the feeble old man.

It was found that the old gentleman had not altered his will, save by one slight codicil, in consequence of this catastrophe; it was, indeed, not necessary. The property was left to the son, and in the event of his decease, unmarried, to Miss Phillis Mercham. This young lady was now about nineteen years old, a resident of the house, the adopted daughter of the old Squire, as she was the orphan child of his dearest friend. Mr. Vynes had cherished a hope that she would be still more his daughter, and to his great joy, Athelstane the son, of course—seemed attracted by the girl.

This was all done with now, and, until Miss Mercham was of age, Mr. John Vynes, the brother of the dead Squire, came, with his family, to reside at Marsh Coppice to look after the estate and to help the girl in her new position. This was in compliance with the codicil just mentioned. Mr. John, who had several children, and was by no means in such good circumstances as his brother, was to receive a handsome sum for his services.

The family arrived, and, as may be supposed, Miss Mercham, the heiress, was the centre of attention and adulation. If flattery could have won her heart, the

Vynes family would have been loved beyond measure; but in her case, as in so many others, this missed its mark, and, ere she had been under Mr. John's care two months, her feeling in regard to him was almost that of repugnance, leavened by something which resembled dread.

This latter feeling was perhaps due to the too evident desire of Mr. John and his wife to secure Phillis for their son, a huge, hulking boor of five-and-twenty, to whom the girl had at once taken a dislike. She would have done so in any case, she felt; but his—or rather his parents'—advances were made so coarsely, while her heart was still aching for the gallant young fellow who had so lately died, and who was dearer to her than even the old Squire had guessed, that the sound of Lawrence's voice and the sight of his figure were alike distasteful to her.

Lawrence was the son of Mr. John, and, with her grief at the loss of her sweetheart so fresh upon her, it was no wonder that Phillis regarded him unfavourably. Yet it must be owned that the general opinion respecting this individual did not coincide with that of the young lady. He was usually esteemed a frank, outspoken, manly young fellow, with nothing boorish or loutish in his style; but Phillis could see no good qualities in him. Whatever he might be, she could not bear him as a suitor.

The young man soon found that he was at a disadvantage; but his father would not hear of this, vowing that it was only his own want of tact which kept him in the background.

"Now, Lawrence," said his parent, at the conclusion of a discussion, in which the younger had come in for a share of strong remonstrance—or as he mentally described it, "of bullying"—"there is to be an entertainment at the Ridge House next week, to which everybody is expected to go. Old Sir Thomas Tomkins gives it, he says, in aid of the village hospital; we know he wants to be member for the county at the next election. However, we must go. Phillis must go out for the first time. The evening begins with a play, and winds up with a dance. We shall not stay for the dance; but you will have a chance you must not miss. I will take care that you lose the rest of the party, and that ought to be enough. I hear Phillis at the piano; you had better go and see her."

The young fellow, with anything but a cheerful face, obeyed the order, and found

Phillis looking very pale still, from the contrast with her black dress, but none the less pretty for that, and the flush, which for a while mantled her cheek as she looked round and saw who had entered the room, made her look prettier still.

"Do not leave off, Phillis," began the young man; "that is my favourite piece of all you play."

The somewhat vexed expression which had risen as the girl recognised him, vanished before an irrepressible smile, as she said: "That is strange, Mr. Lawrence, as I never tried it before. It only came down from London last night."

"I might have expected as much," said Lawrence; "there seems a fate about all I ever say to you, Phillis; and why do you always call me Mr. Lawrence? I have asked you—there! now you are going away. I really wish to have one minute's serious conversation with you."

"I hear my aunt calling me," returned Phillis, rising. "No—I cannot stay, Mr. Lawrence," she added, drawing quickly back, as he made an attempt to seize her hand; "you must excuse me for leaving you."

With this she was gone, and the young man, after one rueful look at the door which had closed behind her, turned and stared abstractedly at the wintry landscape, the bare, black trees, and the naked hedges, outside the house.

"I could have spoken then," he muttered at last. "I must get it over somehow, and I think I could have done it this morning."

Conscious that she had treated her cousin—as she called him—with something of rudeness, Phillis was anxious to prevent him feeling hurt by her conduct, and so was a little more genial in her manner to him than before, much to the gratification of Mr. Vynes, but—not very wonderfully—to the embarrassment of the young fellow himself.

It was curious to observe how much Mr. Vynes was interested in the Ridge House fête. "Quite a Christmas fête of the olden time," he declared; perhaps he did not know exactly what he meant by this, but it did very well. It was to be held two days before Christmas, so that all the holiday-folk would be able to attend, and Mr. Vynes was never tired of telling Phillis all items of news connected therewith, or of assuring her how much she would enjoy herself.

"And mind, Lawrence," said the senior,

in a warning voice to his son, just after one of these conversations with Phillis, "you will have her to yourself for the best part of the evening. You must make the best of such a chance. You must, I say, or we shall have some one else snapping her up, and the money will go out of our family."

"But if she will not give me a chance!" argued Lawrence. "I——"

This bare suggestion made the father quite furious. "She is a slight, nervous girl," he said, "without any will of her own, and can be compelled to do anything if properly dealt with."

Lawrence was silenced, but scarcely looked convinced. However, as his father happened to be from home a great deal during the next few days, Lawrence got on pretty fairly; not that he could secure many, or even any, tête-à-tête interviews with Phillis. He did nerve himself to make several attempts, but she evaded him.

At last the fête was at hand; it was on the day following that on which Mr. Lawrence mounted the solitary saddle horse of the establishment and rode over to Stenham, a tolerably large village some few miles off, once of some importance as being on the high road, and a "change" for the coaches, and now of some, but far less importance, as being on a branch railway.

Whatever Mr. Lawrence's business, it was quietly transacted, for it led him to a row of cottages quite beyond the limits of the village proper, where he remained for several hours. On returning to the inn, he learned that his horse had fallen dead-lame, and would require at least a couple of days' rest before leaving the stable.

This was unpleasant, as the hire of a "trap" was an expense he had not contemplated, and, in truth, could hardly afford.

"There is a gent going to drive over your way, sir," said the ostler; "he has come in from the station. I think he's one of that lot." The ostler nodded in the direction of a large bill displayed on the tavern wall, which set forth the attractions of the Ridge House entertainments. "He will be glad to give you a lift, I know. Here he comes."

Sure enough, the man was now seen driving from the stable-yard, and Lawrence readily addressed him.

The hirer of the trap was a tall, smart-looking fellow, and well dressed to boot;

he was very dark, as if sunburnt, or, as was more likely, as if he were a Spaniard or Italian, and he had altogether a professional air. At any rate this was Lawrence's mental summing up, as he spoke to the stranger; he told him the "fix" he was in, and asked leave to share the accommodation and expense of the vehicle.

The stranger eyed him closely, then in a tone which had in it no foreign twang, said he was welcome to a seat; but having hired the vehicle on his own account, he could not allow him to pay any share.

"That is kind of you," said Lawrence; "but come in and have a glass of wine—or brandy and water will be better, such a day as this."

This was refused also.

"You are a most uncommon professional!" exclaimed Lawrence, as he sprang into the trap; "and I hope you will have a good day to-morrow."

"So do I," said the driver.

"I suppose you do," returned Lawrence, with a laugh. "By-the-by, are you in the dramatic, or the conjuring, or the artistic department? I see all these are in great force, according to your bills."

"I play a part," said the stranger, who was evidently not a loquacious person, and whose manner of looking sideways at his companion while speaking was not exactly pleasant.

"I thought so," replied Vynae. "I shall be there——"

The recollection of what he was to be there for checked his speech, and he sat for some little time in silence, brooding over thoughts which were not calming or agreeable.

At last he roused himself; they had just crossed a swell in the road from which the first glimpse of Marsh Coppice House was obtained. This familiar view seemed now to startle the young man, or to brave him to some resolve.

"Look here," he said; his companion obeyed him literally, and looked him full in the face; "do you want to earn a couple of guineas easily—for less than ten minutes' work?"

"Most men do," replied the stroller, with a meaning smile; "so you may say I do. What then?"

"I can put it in your way, and it will be in your way in more senses than one," said Lawrence; "for you will have to play a part."

"I may quote Snug the joiner, and say, 'I pray you give it me, for I am slow of study,'" returned the driver.

"Hum! You do not look like it, if you are," continued Lawrence; "but I can make the proper answer, and say, 'you may do it extempore.' I will see you to-morrow night, after the burletta. Perhaps I shall not want you, but you shall have the money in any case."

"Thank you," interrupted the other.

"You are rather a queer fellow," said Lawrence; "however, I will go on. If you have to help me, I shall want you to make up a little, as if you had come from foreign parts, you know. You can do that easily, for you look like a foreigner. You will have to give a message; that is all."

"This message will be not strictly true, I presume," said the actor, with another of his meaning smiles.

"It will not be true," assented Lawrence; "but I can honestly say, for the sake of the poor fellow to whom it relates, as well as my own, that I wish it were entirely a fact."

There was some more conversation, Lawrence sustaining the chief part in an excited manner not customary with him. Then he alighted at the by-road which led to Marsh Coppice; his companion, who of course went on to the neighbouring town, watched him until he disappeared with the same mirthless smile he had several times worn, soon succeeded, however, by a thoughtful frown. Then pulling up the collar of his coat, for flakes of snow began to fall, he drove steadily on through the early twilight to the little town, where everyone was ready to talk about the great doings of the morrow.

These were on a really creditable scale; a huge addition to the house being fitted up as a theatre; while several little nooks of the grounds had been covered in, and thoroughly warmed, so that there was quite a choice of promenades, winter though it was. The mansion itself was a great, old-fashioned, rambling place, the rooms and passages of which were lined with choice evergreens, lent by various neighbours, making a handsome show.

On the important night, the company came in at Ridge House freely enough to ensure a success, and early came the party from Marsh Coppice.

Things had been going well there in the estimation of Mr. Vynae. He had not seen his son so excited and gay for a long while. He was rather fitful, it was true; but that was only natural when a man was about to take so important a step as he evidently had in his mind.

He was on especially good terms with Miss Phillis, from the paternal view. If the girl did shrink a little from him now and then, it was of no great consequence; she had not strength of mind sufficient to utter a firm refusal.

The company at the fête would not be very numerous until near the dance, but there was a fair muster; Sir Thomas Tomkins and family being seated early, to set an example, as were the Marsh Coppice people. The burletta was played; in this the stranger of the previous day was not recognised by Lawrence; in fact, he could not have been in the cast. However, there were other things to follow—monologues, duologues, and the like—in which he might appear.

"Now, Lawrence," whispered his father, "I shall propose a stroll about the place. Everybody will be staring at the conjuring and rubbish, so we shall have it all to ourselves. I will take your mother and sisters away; the rest I leave to you. Only remember, it must be settled to-night."

"It shall be," exclaimed the young man, with unexpected warmth. "Young—young Harper of the Moat House has sent for me; he is—is waiting behind. I know what he wants. I will just tell him I cannot spare time for his business to-night and come back at once."

If a friend really awaited the young fellow, he must have been soon dismissed, for in another minute he was going towards the stage door to find his driver of the previous day. He did not know his name, but had no doubt that he could describe him closely enough. He was saved all trouble, in this respect, for, as he hurried along a passage, he met the man of whom he was in search, so muffled up that Lawrence hardly knew him; but, on a bitter winter night, this was not at all strange.

"Here you are, thank Heaven!" cried Vynes; "can you spare the ten minutes I asked you for?"

"I can," responded the other, with his usual brevity.

"Then you must come up to the party; you will see me within a few minutes," pursued Lawrence. "Ask for Mr. Vynes—that is my father—say you have come over from the station, having promised a friend of yours—Mr. Athelstane Vynes (don't forget the name)—to do so without loss of time."

"What name?" ejaculated the other.

"Vynes. Athelstane Vynes." repeated

Lawrence. "He was my cousin, and, I believe, one of the best and finest young fellows in the world; but he was murdered by savages in Africa. You must say that this is a mistake; that you have seen him a prisoner in Morocco, or somewhere; that he was not allowed to write; but that the Consul was trying to get his release. There is sure to be a Consul of some sort everywhere. That is all."

"But why raise false hopes? If the young man were killed——!" began the actor.

"I cannot help that, and I cannot stop to explain," said Lawrence. "If I do not start something now—my father—the young lady—— No, hang it! I cannot tell all that. Will you do it?"

The stranger looked piercingly at him for a moment—Lawrence had never met such a gaze in his life—then smiled his strange smile, in which, however, there was now something pleasanter, and said:

"I will."

Lawrence hastily gave him a few more directions, then hurried back to his friends.

As said, the next part of the entertainment was a display of magic. As this was by a celebrated foreign conjuror, everybody pressed to see it, save the Vynes party. These—as Mr. Vynes complained that he felt quite faint from the heat—left the theatre to saunter through the deserted rooms and corridors of the great house and its additions.

"You will take care of Phillis for a few minutes," said Mr. Vynes, as they entered a suite of rooms adorned with shrubs, among which glimmered a number of the nearly obsolete lamps once so dear to Vauxhall patrons, but quite empty of guests. "I will just ascertain if Mr. Wyburn has come. I was to see him to-night, and so combine business with pleasure."

He drew his daughters towards him as he spoke, and turned to leave the room, managing to throw a very meaning glance to his son as he did so. Phillis at first shrank from the proffered arm of the young man, but accepted it, in instinctive dread of a frown which gathered on the features of Mr. Vynes; when, at that moment, a man entered the room.

The dim light of the place was against speedy recognition, while he was besides so muffled up, although in a different fashion, that at the first glance, Lawrence did not know him for his ally. As he approached he knew him, and drew a long

breath, feeling that the critical moment had come.

The stranger coming straight towards them, Mr. Vynes turned with an annoyed air, as if to enquire the cause of the interruption.

The man said abruptly, "You do not know me, I perceive, Mr. Vynes?"

Lawrence felt the arm which rested on his own tremble, and saw his companion start and change colour—quite needlessly, he thought, for nothing had been as yet said to disturb her.

"No, I do not," replied Mr. Vynes; "have you any business with me?"

"I thought you would like to know the earliest news of your nephew," returned the man, "so I have come to tell you that he is alive and well, and in England."

"Impossible!" cried Mr. Vynes, changing colour in his turn; while Lawrence shook his head to advise the stranger that he was not following the agreed plan—"we know too well—"

But he was interrupted here by a cry which was almost a shriek, and Phillis sprang towards the stranger, and to the intense astonishment of the party—to that of Lawrence, perhaps, above all—fell into his arms.

"My dear—dearest girl!" exclaimed the man, bending his head, and kissing the hysterical Phillis—Lawrence looking on, speechless with amazement; while Mr. Vynes could hardly utter a word from surprise, anger, and alarm mingled.

"What—what do you mean—how——?" he began; but the stranger threw off his huge wrappers as he spoke, and drawing himself up as Phillis raised herself, clinging to his arm nevertheless—he looked boldly at Mr. Vynes.

That gentleman actually staggered a pace backwards, then gasped: "Why—you are—you are——"

"I am Athelstane Vynes, your brother's son," said the new comer; "no stranger now," with the subdued smile which seemed natural to him; "you are my nearest relatives, and therefore my nearest friends." He held out his hand as he spoke, the elder took it mechanically—he tried to say something of welcome, but fairly broke down; his wife and daughters greeted Athelstane, and then so did the wonderstruck Lawrence.

"You are not an actor or a conjuror, after all," he began; it was a feeble beginning, perhaps; but he could do no better.

"No," laughed Athelstane, more heartily this time, as he grasped the outstretched hand of Lawrence; "I have only been conjuror enough to find out that you are a thoroughly good fellow, and one to whom I have, in my mind, done great injustice. I will not now allude to the mishaps which led to the belief in my death, or of the shock I received on casually meeting an acquaintance at Southampton, who told me of the death of my poor old father. He had been here recently, so knew all the tittle-tattle of the place, which included some items," here he pressed the arm he held, and glanced at Lawrence, "which determined me to come on here without first writing or telegraphing. I know, from enquiries I have made, as well as from your own lips, Lawrence, how wrong he was, and I will do you a good turn, and stand your friend, if I can."

"Will you?" exclaimed his cousin, with a sudden change in his manner.

"I will," replied Athelstane firmly; "all the influence I have is at your service."

Mr. Vynes, the senior, was an amazed listener to all this, wondering what would come next; he soon knew.

"Then, now is the time!" cried Lawrence. "I have kept my secret long enough, to my misery, and to yours, Phillis. It is of no use your looking at me like that, father; I could not do more. I tell you it was impossible, for I am married. There now! And my wife and her baby are staying at Stenham—there now! So, Athelstane, here is your chance to do me a good turn."

The sound of applause from the theatre announced the close of some part of the entertainment, and stragglers were seen approaching. The gasping and bewildered Mr. Vynes could say nothing, so that his boiling wrath cooled a little before he could give it vent, or find an opportunity to speak to his son. As we are not telling the history of Lawrence, it will suffice to say that Athelstane proved a most effectual peace-maker, and by his influence the timid, pretty little wife—a country doctor's daughter—was received and welcomed at Marsh Coppice House, which was soon vacated by Mr. John Vynes: he professed the greatest friendship for his nephew, but did not attend his marriage in the following year.

Lawrence, however, came home to the wedding, travelling a thousand miles to do so; for his cousin had advanced the capital to place him in a firm which he represented

abroad, and in justice to him it must be said that he made a capital man of business.

THE PLEA.

"It was so sweet and lovely in its youth,"
So Memory pleaded, while her tender hand
Strove round the drooping leaves to draw a band,
As helpful as the broken strands of truth.
"The past's lost glory dims the present more,"
He answered, with his clear eyes bright with
scorn;
"Yet," whispered Memory, "when it first was
born,
So many weaking leaves you saw, and bore."
"Ay, for I thought that ever at its root,
Were Love and Faith," replied the sweet proud
voice.
"And can no penitence, no second choice,
No pledge renewed, restore its blighted life?"
"My utter trust met treachery," he said.
And Memory heard, and left the pale bloom dead.

SWEETS.

IF Shepherdess Walk were ever a pastoral resort, as its name implies, it must have been in days remote, when citizens resorted to Islington or Highbury, to eat curds and whey; when there were groves about Clerkenwell; and when cattle grazed in Bloomsbury. At the present day there is nothing rural about Shepherdess Walk, nor any greenery in Underwood Row. The busy City Road is close at hand, where tram-cars roll jingling up and down, and where the roar of traffic sounds unceasingly. At the corner of the Row rises a huge pile of buildings with turrets and many windows, but bare, too, and gloomy-looking; it is the great workhouse of Saint Luke's, the great industrial quarter of London; a parish where artizans and workmen of all kinds are in a great majority, and where once was the home of many trades and crafts which have faded away, or migrated elsewhere.

Happily, other industries arise to take the place of those fallen out of date, and among the former may be noted the growth of confectionery, a trade of which London now enjoys the lion's share. And, indeed, a visit to one of the chief confectionery works in the metropolis brings us into the neighbourhood of the Pastoral Walk, and the Wooded Row. It may be said at once that a considerable slice of the Row, and the Walk, and the adjoining streets is occupied by a factory that turns out all kinds of sweets on a scale that surpasses all previous records. Here are crates and bales, huge packing boxes and tin-lined cases, with quite a medley of

carts and vans waiting about the gateway, with wafts of steam rising in the air, with the roar and rattle of machinery sounding in the ears; and, in addition to sights and sounds, a pleasant pervading fragrance suggestive at once of "sugar and spice, and all that's nice." Then, there are rows of counting houses lighted up and gleaming in the somewhat murky atmosphere; and behind these, gallery over gallery, room within room, each tenanted by its crew of busy workmen or sprightly quick-handed girls, where fires burn and cauldrons bubble, where sugar flows in all sorts of channels and is dexterously twisted and turned into all kinds of shapes, moulded like clay, and cut like dough, and run like melted glass, and pulled, and drawn out till it resembles a great twist of golden hair. It is all bewildering, confusing, a whirling scene of orderly confusion as we climb up steep ladders, squeeze through passages, between piles of boxes, and dive down into dark recesses; as we thread our way among the great brass cauldrons filled with boiling sugar; between rows of tables topped with iron plates, where busy hands are at work, without haste and without rest, always shaping, twisting, and drawing; among great piles of boxes, among shoals of wooden trays borne quickly hither and thither on the heads, or in the arms, of legions of ministering spirits. Sometimes we come to a window or perhaps an opening with a crane slowly swinging its burden over the carts below; and here we get a peep at the great wilderness of houses all round, the expanse of dull and dingy-looking roofs, and innumerable chimneys blackened with the smoke of countless fires; the humble roofs of the toilers and workers of the great City, unrelieved by any more pretentious buildings than the tall towers of the great workhouse close by.

The great pans of boiling sugar first invite attention. There is nothing more ticklish than boiled sugar. It must be cooked to a nicety — just enough and not too much, otherwise the result is failure: stickiness, in the case of insufficient cooking; granulation, where boiled too long. Modern science substitutes the thermometer for ruder tests, and behold yonder copper pan which is arriving, as to its contents, at the critical stage, has its thermometer gently simmering in the broth!

"But here is the old way," explains our guide, a young, and yet experienced

member of the firm, who has known everything about sugar from his youth up; and, he calls for a bowl of water, wets his fingers therein, and dipping them calmly into the boiling mixture, brings out a small portion which he critically examines. It is a trial by ordeal; but not for all the wealth of the Indies would the present writer repeat the experiment. The sugar is crisp and breaks; science and experience both pronounce that the proper moment has arrived; the great copper pan is lifted, its liquid contents spread softly over the oiled surface of the long, broad iron plate; while the sugar is still almost liquid, it is lifted in a viscid sheet, doubled, rolled into a huge pipe or cone; a nimble assistant seizes the point of the cone and hurries off with it, drawing out a cylinder of soft sugar, rolling it as he goes; when the cylinder has been reduced to its proper dimensions, some one else seizes it and cuts it into lengths. It may be twisted in corkscrew fashion or rolled into balls; according to flavouring or manipulation, the end of the business may be "brandy balls," "bulls' eyes," or any other kind of ball the fancy may desire; but anyhow the viscid mass must be dealt with quickly and decisively; the resulting sweets packed off to the drying room; and then while still warm be weighed into glass jars, to find their way into every part of the kingdom. Or, is it an affair of rock?—of those almond rocks, that have so long been the delight of early age—then the great iron plate is covered with a layer of split almonds, there are moveable edges, gauges, and other apparatus, the melted sugar is poured upon the layer of almonds, and rests at a uniform level, it is marked with its appropriate squares by an iron frame, and is presently broken up into so many squares of hardbake or almond rock, to be packed with the same speed as its predecessors. And about such a simple matter as splitting almonds there is something to be said. There is a machine which splits the almonds with the utmost accuracy, and for ordinary hardbake nothing better is desired; but for any *recherché* article in which the pure whiteness of the almond must be retained, hand-splitting must still be resorted to; for Nature makes the almond like every other kernel in two lobes, not exactly alike, or with a mathematically even surface. The human hand can divide the two lobes so that the pearly lustrous hue of the adjoining surfaces is preserved; the machine cuts ruthlessly

across, without any regard to Nature's artistic touches.

A spice of romance, too, lingers about all this sugar boiling. There is a ghost in the house, a family ghost, that takes an appropriate sugary form, and which is continually being raised with more or less mystery and solemnity. The ghost belongs to the firm; they raised it; they invented it. The ghost was a great success in its time, and still attracts succeeding generations of juveniles. The raising of the ghost is one of the sights of the establishment.

First of all, the sugar has to be pulled: a roll of freshly-boiled sugar is taken up in a wisp by the operator; it is thrown over a hook affixed to the wall, pulled out, doubled over the hook, pulled again, and so doubled and pulled and pulled and doubled till it assumes an appearance like spun glass, and becomes light, and tough, and manageable. With rolls of this spun sugar the ghost is built up. There are his eyes, of the circumference of saucers; his cavernous mouth; his apology for a nose. All these are enveloped in a great roll of boiled sugar. He is now a ghost indeed: formless, portentous, as big as a bolster; bigger indeed than most bolsters. And how he is to be got piecemeal into the mouths of his admirers is a problem that seems for the moment insoluble.

All this time he is being rolled and rolled over and over. A moment's rest would be fatal to the symmetry of his figure, and then, at the supreme moment, a strong man seizes him, as it were, by the hair of his head, and lifts him bodily into the air. The ghost elongates suddenly, and then, without an instant's delay, someone seizes the loose end of him and starts away with it down the long table. The ghost walks at last; he runs, he gallops! But a minute since a huge bolster of a ghost, he is now spun out into a mile of ghosts, of the thickness of a sugar stick, cut into lengths, packed off to dry, to be presently wrapped in appropriate wrappers and packed in suitable boxes, and despatched to the ends of the earth.

But where is the ghost? you will ask. Well, he is inside; and if you want to know any more about him, you must buy a stick of the Ghost Rock.

Then there are those parti-coloured sticks—blue and white, and what not—so attractive to budding fancy. Here the built-up mass assumes the form of a great striped buoy, such as you may see bobbing about in sea or rivers under the jurisdic-

tion of the Trinity Board But the great buoy is presently run out into sugar-sticks, and loses its chance of marking a tideway or showing the edge of a dangerous sand-bank.

As for coker-nuts, there is no end to them. They are brought in cart-loads from the Docks, where vessels bring them in ballast. The milk of the coker-nut goes as a waste product; it has not yet been utilised in the arts; but here are men who do nothing but split the nuts all day long, pour away the milk, and feed the machine which, driven by a steam engine, slices the nut into delicate layers, which are forthwith dried, covered with sugar, and made into those pleasing confections known as coker-nut chips, coker-nut candy, coker-nut ice: all bright and gleaming with crystallised sugar, and of many colours.

Drops, we may suppose, were, once upon a time, actually dropped: the confectioner filled his spoon with the required mixture and dropped little portions, one by one, upon his baking tin or oiled paper. Now they are made by machinery: punched out by revolving cylinders from half-cooled sheets of boiled sugar.

From drops to lozenges is not an unduly abrupt transition; and gum goods follow closely on. Here we are completely in the domain of woman's work. Away from the boiling cauldrons, the steam and savour of hot sugars and essences, here are girls deftly rolling out sheets of sugared gums, cutting out, stamping, wrapping, bottling, and boxing. Neat, well clad, with pleasant, cheerful occupation, these confectionery girls seem to share a far happier lot than the generality of working girls. Here is quite a crack regiment indeed among the battalions of female workers. Smart and comely for the most part, there is a bright and jolly air about the girls. Nor is wholesome supervision wanting. The firm whose factory we are describing is named Barratt and Sons; but did the custom of the trade permit, it might also be written "and daughters," for here are young ladies who take a share in the management and act as commanding officers of this spirited female corps. And here, in one of the larger rooms, where all kinds of sweets are being made, is the proscenium of a little theatre, at whose stage, on certain nights, are enacted variety entertainments, farces, and other diversions—with the employés of the house as actors and audience.

Wonders never cease. Surely we have seen everything about these great con-

fectionery works, that one might think sufficient to supply the whole nation with sweets. Not at all. Here is our courteous guide ordering forth a carriage and pony from the stables, and we are soon flying through the streets of North London, twisting in and out among tram-cars and omnibuses, and loaded drays, and great high vans, and greengrocers' carts, and all kinds of equipages, but leaving everything behind us, and whirling along till the wind whistles in our ears. Then there are wide open thoroughfares, the Road of the Seven Sisters opens out; the New River glides past us; we have just left the great engine tower behind us; here are parks and groves and newly founded settlements; and leaving far in the rear the decorous family landau, the sporting butcher's cart, the cheesemonger's fast-trotting tit, here we are at Wood Green, with the Alexandra Palace looking down upon us from its grassy heights, and below the embankment of the rival railways, scattered suburban houses, and a big factory with long rows of windows, and a tall chimney which seems to say, "Here is something like a manufacture going on, if you please."

Here our flying pony dashes in among waggons, drays, and vans, and piles of great iron tanks riveted and bolted, which surely have nothing to do with confectionery. But, yes, they are all to be filled with sugar-plums, and sent off to the Antipodes, where iron tanks are saleable as well as all kinds of sweets. And then among avenues of packing cases, and past brightly-lighted counting houses, glowing warmly in the afternoon chill and haze, we reach a scene that rivals anything you may read of in the Arabian Nights, in a sombre kind of grandeur. It is the Hall of the Brazen Vessels. Long rows of enormous vases gleam in the lurid glow of furnace fires, as they whirl round on their bases, with ceaseless roar and clang—literally ceaseless—allowing Sundays to poetic license; for there are night and day gangs who continually wait upon the glowing furnaces and the great revolving brass vases. There is a roar like that of the sea as the brazen pans revolve, and like the shrill voice of the pebbles as they are caught in the wash of the waves, is the swish of the sugar-plums as they rush from side to side.

Many may remember the revolving brass pans at the Inventions Exhibition. These were slightly impressive, but when you have seventy or eighty all at work together in

a dervish kind of dance, the effect is not only impressive but astounding. And these pans contain some of the brightest and daintiest productions of the confectioner's art. Technically these are pan goods, and include sugared almonds, comfits of all kinds, wonderfully glazed and polished; with all kinds of sugared ball, vanilla beans, and many other sweeties, all of which are built up of continuous layers of saccharine matter as they roll round and round in the brazen pans.

After the Brazen Hall, with its tumult and uproar, the comparative quietude of the other departments of the factory strikes with a sense of relief. Here the young women have it nearly all to themselves. They may not venture among the brazen pots; but elsewhere they seem quite at home and about work which quite suits them: rolling out great cakes of lozenges; covering slabs of "cream" with liquid chocolate; and, most charming occupation of all judging by results, inspecting the moulds and pouring out the liquid amber that goes to form our favourite sweet, the "fondant."

But most amazing of all is the provision for chocolate and sugar cigars. Christmas is coming on, and, at that festive season, there are unlimited orgies, it seems, among infant Britons in the way of chocolate cigars.

Now "what is your turn-out of cigars a day?" is a question suggested by the preparations made for the manufacture of these harmless luxuries.

"About two hundred gross a day," is the calm reply.

Nearly thirty thousand cigars a day, that is; and they are all built up of sundry layers of sugar and chocolate, with a curl of red sugar at the end to represent fire. At one time the fiery tip of the cigar was done in Dutch metal; but small children were inclined to choke themselves with Dutch metal, and the sugar, though not so realistic, is much safer and certainly more toothsome.

A pleasant sight, too, are the great counters full of "mixtures." Almost everything that can be made in the way of sweets appears in great vertical piles; and these are taken in horizontal strata and packed in boxes which afford a delightful variety of good things. And, of these various mixtures, this one firm alone supplies some eleven tons every week; all of which are duly sucked and swallowed by the great English-speaking race in various parts of the world.

Then there are the packets of sweets. Dear to the heart of the youth as to the man is a little speculation, and, if in addition to sugar-plums, a child gets for its penny a brooch, a ring, or chain, who is the worse for it? Cases of this miniature jewellery are emptied every week in making up these packets. The articles are neatly finished and nearly all come from Bohemian workshops. The latest device in this way is a "Jubilee" packet, each of which contains a miniature model of one of the "Jubilee" coins. If the originals have not proved popular among the financial world, the children have welcomed their representatives gladly—and hundreds of thousands of these packets are made up weekly.

Indeed, for children, as well as for those of larger growth, constant novelty must be provided. New combinations must be invented, new placards, new show-cards must be designed and printed, new labels for boxes, new jokes and "wheezees." "Plenty-for-money sticks," "Jaw-breakers," "Didn't I told you so!" are all attractive titles; while "Yankee Pankee" has had a tremendous run. "About fifteen thousand gross a week," says its inventor modestly. Then there are "Gutter Straps" and "Chip Chows," "Anchor Rock" and "Winter Warmers." Names and varieties are almost infinite; but all are of good wholesome sugar, or gum, or gelatine, or chocolate, or liquorice.

"Not that there is much credit in being free from adulteration," says one of the makers of good things, "for what can you have cheaper than sugar?"

Among the curious sights of the factory are the great drying-rooms, heated by steam-pipes, one over the other, to the very top of the building. Here the moulded sweets take substance as well as form—here are mountains of rock and pillars of candy. There is as much sweetstuff here as might supply the nation, you would think; and yet it all vanishes day by day, and its place is supplied by fresh arrivals. There is much more to be seen; but human capacity for seeing things is limited, at least when a distinct impression of things seen has to be carried away. But, anyhow, it is a pleasure to come across a trade which is not suffering from depression, a business which employs such a large amount of female labour—nearly a thousand workpeople altogether, of which more than half are women and girls—and which is still craving for more.

The whole building is now lighted up,

and its many windows shine cheerfully out into the darkness ; but, as night comes on, the fervour and bustle of the establishment seem only intensified. More carts and vans arrive and depart, great loads of boxes, huge crates of sundries. Who would have thought there would have been such a big thing in sugar-plums ! Not the present writer, for one, who departs from the scene, as it were, saturated with sweetness, and disposed to look back upon the whole scene as a sort of Arabian Nights Entertainment.

POOR FOLK.

A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

By the Author of "David Ward," "The Story of a Sorrow,"
"A Dreadful Mésalliance," etc. etc.

CHAPTER VII.

IN a workhouse located in the East End of London city an extensive house-cleaning had just come to an end. House-cleanings are very frequent in institutions of this kind, on the principle that cleanliness is a kind of virtue, and that labour does the pauper inmates good and keeps them out of mischief. Yet some of the old women in the Permanent Ward, who had just finished a fortnight's hard work that afternoon, did not look particularly bent on mischief, as they sat, in various attitudes of weariness, round the three narrow windows that overlooked a brick wall and a paved court.

Paupers do not expect luxuries when they come on the parish, and need not therefore be supposed to suffer any keen disappointment when they do not get them ; but a few of the older inhabitants remembered when a pretty stretch of turf had held the place of the bricks and cobblestones, and felt the loss of it a continual grievance.

Now, if these ungrateful ones had had the interests of the institution at heart, they would have told themselves that the whilom bit of green now returned a comfortable little sum in ground-rents, and would have ceased to regret it ; but, somehow, paupers never profess any passionate attachment for the workhouse, and cling to their right of grumbling from time immemorial.

"It rested one's whole body to look out on the grass in old times," an old woman said fretfully.

"Yes, and the smell of the turf when it was turned over in spring-time refreshed one's heart," another chimed in ; "and one needs a free breath now and then where the very air is full of bricks and mortar."

Here a pretty general chorus of complaint followed, in which all joined volubly enough, except one white-haired old woman sitting a little outside their circle, and knitting mechanically.

Seeing that she neither spoke nor apparently heard the talk around her, a youngish woman, with a fat, colourless face, leant towards her and twitched the knitting out of her hands with a little laugh of malice.

"One would think by you that hard work mattered, that it would bring you either money or praise. For my part, my bones ache so after all the scrubbing we have done, that I am able to rest and be thankful."

"They are the matron's stockings," the woman answered, in a dull, level tone. "She said I might knit them here instead of in the work-room, and it was kind of her, as I like better to be here."

"I don't b'lieve you've a bit of right to knit her stockings ; it's the parish supports us, and not her ; and I've 'alf a mind to let the Board know as she makes us work for her."

"I like knitting," the woman answered in the same spiritless tone.

"Well, I don't ; and I like working for the matron least of all. I should like to know, does she ever do anything for us that she isn't bound to do ?"

"She is kind enough ; but, at any rate, I would rather do a good turn sometimes than always sit waiting to get it."

"More particularly as you'd wait a precious long time. But you're one of the pious ones you are, I see, Mrs Rayne," the fat woman said with a jeering laugh. "I suppose there are folks that can return thanks night and morning for the workus ; but I ain't one on 'em, and I won't say I am."

Mrs. Rayne did not answer ; she never argued—possibly because there was nothing to say on the other side. Besides, she pitied these people among whom her lot had fallen. Grief had not hardened her heart ; it had only broken it. From the day when she returned to Bloater's Rents to find Gordon gone, the world had become a wilderness to her. She had loved him with all her heart, believed in him with all her faith, trusted him with all her strength ; and that made the anguish all the more.

She did not know what to think about him : whether to think that he was heartless, and had abandoned her, or that he had been lured away and lost. There are

so many ways in which a boy can disappear in London.

For once, Tom had been willing enough to tell her the truth; but then the truth was so little: Gordon had come back, after she had left for Appleholme, and had looked in at the door and had run away again; that was all he knew.

"If you had let me know at the first, perhaps I could have found him," she said despairingly.

"I thought he would be sure to turn up; and, besides, what does it matter about him—a beggar's brat—that has been a burden for years!"

After Gordon's departure she seemed to age all at once: her thick hair turned snow-white, and the wrinkles in her face puckered themselves up into furrows. Still, she did not regret what she had done. She had kept the child out of pure love, and he had been a source of unalloyed happiness till she lost him.

Despair does not enter so quickly into the heart in old age as in youth, but once it has found a place there, it becomes an abiding guest. Gordon was the only source of joyful interest Mrs. Rayne had, and without him she grew stupid all at once; slow in her movements, dull in her perception; so that there was no one exactly to blame, when, a year after Gordon's disappearance, she got run over in the street, and had her arm broken. Happily the gentleman whose carriage went over her was a philanthropist; he found out all about her, how she had no means of support but by her own exertions, and he offered her twenty pounds in compensation for her injuries.

On part of this she subsisted till her arm was almost better. Then young Tom had a happy thought. If she would buy a donkey and cart, and start him in the coster line, he would be able to support the two of them. He had a grand voice for crying things, and hawking vegetables was easy work. She consented, she did not know anything better to do; her arm would not be strong for months to come, and Tom must be put to something. So the conkey and cart were bought, and not a very good bargain, for neither she nor Tom understood much of the value of such things. There were some losses in their vegetable purchases at the first, too; but by-and-by they did better, and Tom kept pretty steady, liking work which was not very laborious and which had a profit in it. But after a year he married, and that ended his mother's brief gleam of prosperity.

It was hardly to be expected that the girl Tom chose would be after Mrs. Rayne's heart; but of that she said nothing, holding that, in marriage, the contracting parties should not be troubled with anything less than grave objections. She made the young wife as welcome as she knew how, and believed she was ready to like all that was likeable in her. But unfortunately she was not able to discover much. Tom's bride was idle, dressy, and pert, and the fact of her being young did not seem excuse sufficient for all shortcomings. The two women came to sharp words, as might have been anticipated, and when the wife, in tears, appealed to Tom, he took her part against his mother.

"If you're to be here you must keep a civil tongue in your head," he told her.

"If I'm to be here!" she echoed, "I should like to know who has the best right here?"

"My wife surely, in my house."

"Your house!" she cried, trembling and turning cold, "a pair of rooms that I furnished before you were born, and the donkey and cart, and the business!"

"All mine, all mine," Tom answered coolly.

Then a great wave of passion rose over her heart. "You thief, would you rob me as you robbed Mr. Studd?" she cried.

"That settles the matter," Tom answered, with a great show of dignity. "The same roof won't cover us two a week longer, and you can see to that."

She wrote to Elsie that night. It was a bitter thing to have to do, but what was there in her history that was not bitter?

"Tom means to turn me out of doors, and to keep everything," she wrote, "and so I have thought perhaps you may need me. I am not as strong as I was, but I can nurse, and do a hundred useful things as well as ever, and you may remember, too, that you got my hundred pounds from your grandmother."

The last was perhaps an unwise addition, but in despair and humiliation we sometimes forget to be prudent.

Elsie wrote back coldly, enclosing ten shillings in the letter. She was sorry she could not ask her mother to come North, as their house was small and full of children, and Sandy did not like strangers. She was also sorry Tom wished to be unkind, but most likely he did not mean what he said. As to the money of which her mother spoke, that was a free gift from her dear

grandma. She was sorry her mother harboured any unkind thoughts about it.

Mrs. Rayne folded the ten shillings in a blank sheet of paper and returned it by the next post. Her children were like the young of the pelican, they would devour her very vitals, and never thank her.

When she found out a few days later that Tom had put her on the parish pauper list, she had not a word to say. And when a place was found for her in the workhouse, she went to it without protest. All her past protested against such an outrage, but she was dumb.

Tom came to see her once, touched by some futile compunction. She received him passively, but she was not disposed to talk; even when he suggested that Gordon was in Australia and doing well, she was not roused. If Gordon were alive he must be heartless and ungrateful, like all the rest. Her heart was so torpid with repeated lacerations that it seemed dead.

But pity for her fellow sufferers—that grew keener. Among the paupers were many who felt better for Mrs. Rayne's example, happier for her kindness. Sympathy with all suffering was not a creed with her, it was an instinct. To dress the paralytic; to help the blind to a seat in the sun; to say a kind word always where the occasion offered—that was all she had in her power; but she did it willingly. And slowly to the obtuse senses of her neighbours penetrated the thought that to do good is well, apart from recompense.

It was the month of August, and London, in fashionable parlance, was empty; empty, that is, of the rich, the prosperous, and the pleasure-loving, but full as ever of struggle, and sin, and sorrow. In the narrow court of the workhouse, two pauper women were sitting basking in the sun. The sun did not stay long in the workhouse court, and so getting out to see him there was a special grace accorded to the aged paupers now and then, for good behaviour.

One of the women that he looked down on had never seen him, would never see him on this side of the grave, alas! having been born blind; but she felt his warmth on her face and in her heart, and the other he made happier, too, for blind Sally's sake.

Suddenly there was a ring at the front-gate bell; it was the visitors' hour, and the two women rose immediately to go indoors, with the instinct of flight peculiar to savage creatures.

The one who could see led the other

away carefully, then she came back for the chairs they had been seated on.

She was just descending the steps slowly and heavily, when a young man approached. He turned his head and looked at the old pauper carelessly, and then he stopped. She turned too, but listlessly and incuriously, and then a half-terrified look came into her eyes. Where had she seen that bright dark face before?

"Mother!" the young man said huskily and tentatively; and then with a loud cry she fell on his neck.

She did not want him to speak, did not want him to explain anything; for the moment it was enough to know that he loved her and was there. She sat down on the stone step and drew him to her, and, holding his hand, wept all her despair, and anguish, and doubt of Heaven's mercy away.

"My son, that I loved so, come back after all," she kept repeating to herself in a broken voice.

"I was wrong to go away as I did," Gordon answered humbly; "but my letters, surely they explained everything?"

"What letters?"

"I wrote at least half-a-dozen times, and I thought you were angry with me that you never replied."

"I never got one of them," she said, a hard look coming over her face. Was this another misdeed to be laid at Tom's door? In that case she did not wish to investigate it. "But no matter, since you have come back. Now tell me all about yourself."

So Gordon told her of the voyage to Melbourne; of the friend he had found in Taylor; of the terrible Bush fire, and how he had seen it in time to give warning. "And master was so grateful to me for helping to save the place, that when he got over the first shock of his losses, he asked me to choose anything I liked that he could give me, as a reward. And I chose to come home to you. He said I was to tell you all about life in the Bush, and to offer you a home out there, and work, and splendid payment, if you would go back with me. But if you would rather stop in England, I have plenty of money to make you comfortable, and—I shall stop with you."

"I am ready to go with you anywhere, if it was to prison or the grave," she answered simply.

"Then we have a good life before us, mother, under the Southern Cross."

There was nothing to detain them in London: no tie of either affection or duty.

As soon as suitable clothing could be purchased for Mrs. Rayne, including a host of things for her to fabricate on the passage, the pair set sail.

It was marvellous how the burden of old age seemed to roll away from her in Gordon's presence; how her wrinkled forehead smoothed itself out; how her eyes grew bright, and her step alert; and what a personable elderly woman she looked as she stepped ashore on the other side.

Gordon had learned from her on the passage that he was not her son; but she turned on him sharply as she admitted it, adding, "what makes kinship, if it is not love?" And Gordon was content.

Of her own children she never spoke; it was not her way to dwell on bitter thoughts; they had strange cruel natures, but, perhaps, she had trained them amiss. She sat in judgement on herself before condemning them.

But when she arrived at Wonga Farm, and when a grey-haired man, slightly crippled in both his feet, came towards her leading a bright-faced girl by the hand, and saying "forgive me, mother, and bless my daughter," she turned to Gordon, asking faintly, "Who is this?"

"Dick," the man answered, with the tears falling slowly over his scarred cheeks. "Mother, I never knew how cruelly I had used you till my own child was born."

Measured by her later trials, Dick's misdoing was so small and alight a thing, that she scarcely understood his passion of remorse. She forgave him freely of course, and it was only when she thought of his feelings, as affecting himself, that she felt glad he was so sorry. For her own part, well, he had been but a boy when he went away, and some boys easily forget. While Mrs. Rayne lived, it would always be easier for her to pardon than to censure.

Dick had not meant to neglect her, and even, at the worst, he had never forgotten her unselfishness and patience; but somehow he had not done as she would have wished in the New Country at first, and he could neither tell her that nor lie to her; afterwards, when he steadied down a bit, and when he married the wife who had been his salvation, he saw his wrong-doing as clear as noon, but then it had seemed to him too late. Heaven had been very kind to him, much kinder than he deserved, but

he had had the bitterest trials too. The wife was dead, and all the children but Janet, and he had had a narrow escape for his life in the Bush fire; still he did not complain. Things were worse for many people; he had Janet and his mother now, and the trifle of money he had hidden in the floor of his shanty had been found all right when he went to look for it; and although he was crippled a good deal, he was not past work. It was hard to have to begin all over again, but he was no worse than most of his neighbours. He had got a job on the other side of the river, and good wages, and had just begged off work for a day or two, to come and see his mother.

The secret of Dick's existence Gordon had been at pains to keep on his way out, though many a time it had burned in him for utterance, for he had grown very fond of Dick, and of Janet too.

It was arranged between Taylor and the child's father that Janet should remain at Wonga Farm with her grandmother, the father coming to see her when he could. It was only in a settled home that a girl could be trained to nice womanly ways.

Several years elapsed before the land attained its old look again; but when the crops grew they were excellent, and long afterwards Taylor was known to surmise that the Bush re had not done him much ultimate harm.

Smith and Jenkins felt as if their small antipathy to Gordon had somehow perished that night when he showed himself so brave and skilful; and though they are aware now that he may one day be master at Wonga Farm they acquiesce in the possibility without bitterness.

Janet and Gordon are great friends, though with one stock subject of quarrel between them: Gordon insists that she shall call him uncle; and Janet declares she never will.

As to Mrs. Rayne, Australia is, in her eyes, veritably the land Gordon had dreamed of: a golden land, rich in true hearts, rich in generous sympathies, rich in love; while Gordon—the son who had proved himself her son, despite the accident of other maternity—he, with all whom he cares for happy around him, has but a solitary grief in life—that the Bush fire silenced for all time, at Wonga Farm, the full-throated joyous melody, the mad and merry music of the woods.

"I'LL TELL THEE, DICK, WHERE I HAVE BEEN."

WRITTEN BY ARTHUR PATERSON.

EDITED BY WALTER BESANT,

AUTHOR OF "ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN," "THE REVOLT OF MAN," "CHILDREN OF GIBKON,"
"THE HOLY ROSE," ETC. ETC.

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"I'LL TELL THEE, DICK, WHERE I HAVE BEEN."

CHAPTER I.

HOW FIRST I MET MIKE ALISON.

THE coffee was boiling, the beans were ready, and the bacon was fried to a turn: supper was ready.

It was fifteen minutes since I had trudged wearily home to an empty shanty, desperately hungry and miserably tired. Before I could either rest or eat, a fire had to be kindled on a flat hearth, the wind blowing in the wrong direction; green coffee-berries had to be roasted and ground; and dried bacon and black Mexican beans had to be converted into an eatable condition with the assistance of the frying-pan.

Now this was done. The smoke from the drift-wood fire, which set me coughing for five minutes without intermission, at last found its way out by the door, and the bacon and beans frizzled and cracked as pleasantly as black beans and dried bacon can, on the glowing embers that were left behind.

I smiled with the satisfaction that comes of successful effort. After all, life in sheep-camp had its pleasant side.

Sunset, at the latter end of August, in New Mexico, is the most peaceful time of the day in the finest month of the year. There is no rain in August among the foot-

hills of the Rocky Mountains. The terrific hail and thunder-storms of July, with great murderous hailstones weighing an ounce and more, alternating with fierce, sultry heat, are over. The August sun has still great power, but only for a few hours in the day, and the nights are refreshingly cold; inasmuch that the herder, when he goes to bed, presently drops into the soundest and sweetest slumber, beginning from the moment when his head touches the pillow, and forgets to wake at midnight, to see that his charge have not left the bedding-place for a nocturnal ramble.

However, there was one more duty to perform before I could enjoy my supper in peace: this was to ascertain that my sheep, which I had left a mile to the westward half-an-hour ago, were duly wending their way homewards. With the hasty stride of a hungry man I climbed to the top of the "Round Mound," a hillock of about a hundred feet in height, standing alone in the middle of the prairie, at the foot of which my camp-house was built. The origin of the Round Mound is uncertain. It was supposed by some to have been erected by Indians, in order to mark the presence of water; by others to be the mausoleum of an extinct native tribe. Be this as it may, the little hill was a most convenient camping place, for, at its base, were two pools of water that never dried up, and on its sides the sheep bedded most contentedly; while for miles

around capital pasture of all kinds could be obtained without trouble.

I was glad to see, as I reached the crest of the hill, that my sheep were little more than half-a-mile away, edging steadily towards me with low, mumbling baas. There were two thousand — half the "bunch" owned by myself and my partner — a like number being camped ten miles to the east, in charge of Mexican herders; the whole forming a comfortable little property of four thousand head.

I paused a moment before descending to supper, to take a bird's-eye view of the prospect. I am not, as a general rule, much affected by scenery; but I do not think I have ever stood on the Round Mound, no matter how urgent the business which I had before me might be, without lingering a few moments.

From this place I could see nearly every phase of scenery characteristic of the plains. To the north and east lay prairie, endless prairie, in long "rolls," or undulations, brown in colour, with only a tinge of green here and there, where the summer rains had produced more lasting effect than usual. The grass upon it was short and curly, crisp as the hair of a negro, making the most nourishing pasture in the world, for it cures on the ground, and all through the winter remains as sweet as well-matured hay.

Southward for a mile stretched similar rolling prairie-land, brought suddenly to an end by Eagle Tail Mountain, one of the foot-hills, a great table-land or mesa, with dark, rugged sides, some three hundred feet in height, covered with great square boulders of malpice rock, and forests of cedar trees and oak-scrub. There were cañons here, deep and dark, where you might sometimes find a running stream and tall pines shooting up a hundred feet. Then above cañons and forests, lo! there was another prairie, exactly similar to the one below: a prairie miles in length, which rose gradually until it broke off to give way to a great cone of rock, bare and desolate, the crater of an extinct volcano, which formed the head and centre of Eagle Tail Mountain.

So, slowly turning my head from north to east, and east to south, I reached the west, where lay the finest view of all. From north and east the darkness was hurrying up, for there is no twilight on the prairies; but the west still glowed with lurid reminiscences of the sun, and below, pure and white as an angel's wing, shone

the peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Beneath range after range, stood the foot-hills, falling into deep blue shadow, grand and wild, and of no mean height, but dwindling into utter insignificance before the sharp white ridge which towered behind, grand and unapproachable.

As I looked upon this view, vague thoughts and fancies filled my mind which I might have expressed aloud in a beautiful rhapsody had I been less hungry. I remembered in time, however, that my supper was getting cold, and refrained. But, at this moment, I saw something which made me whistle and exclaim softly to myself. Half-a-mile or so to the west were three horsemen approaching in the direction of the Round Mound at a steady gallop.

Anyone who has ever lived in sheep-camp will understand my excitement at the prospect of visitors. I had been "batching" alone for two months; during this time my partner visited me, for five minutes each time, on six separate occasions, and he was the only living soul I had seen since I left the home-ranche in June. Some men have better luck; but I was on the outskirts of the settlement, with no road or track nearer than two miles, and living in a little "dug-out," scooped from the Round Mound, the whereabouts of which it was difficult to discover, except when the sheep were singing their evening hymn.

Taking all this into consideration, together with the fact that this was my first experience of camp-life, the most unsympathetic reader will understand the delight with which I anticipated the arrival of these strangers.

I went down the hill at a run, narrowly escaping a broken neck among the loose stones; dived into the hut for my revolver — for Western etiquette must be observed — and then walked toward the approaching horsemen, feeling inclined to welcome them with a hearty cheer. Happily, I remembered in time, though I was still young to Western manners, that their reply to such a greeting might probably be a rifle bullet, as the only explanation of conduct which, to their minds, would seem dangerous insanity.

As my visitors came clearly into view, my joyous expectations began to change to extreme curiosity. They wore no hats, and no boots; their ponies had no saddles, and their only reins were rough halters of rope. Before they reached me they slackened speed, and dropped into single file. I noticed, now, that their

heads were bent wearily forward, and that there were streaks of blood on the bare feet of the foremost. Before I could see more he briefly accosted me.

"How far d'you reckon we are from Stockton?"

"Ten miles."

He gave a suppressed sigh, and turned to his companions.

"I guessed it was about that, boys. Considerable pull, you see, yet—worse luck!"

They nodded in silent assent, and looked earnestly behind them. The one who had spoken, however, had his eyes fixed with some intentness upon me, and I expected him to ask for supper, and a night's lodging. To my surprise he turned away, with a curt: "We must keep moving, boys. Bueno noche, stranger!"

A cold wave of disappointment passed over my soul.

"But won't you camp with me to-night?"

The man had turned his horse's head, and was about to urge him forward. He paused at my words, and stared at me harder than before, his companions now following his example. Was there anything wonderful in my simple offer of hospitality?

"I've not much to offer you," I went on hastily. "Nothing but bacon and beans to eat, and a blanket apiece to lie on. But you're heartily welcome to it, and perhaps even rough fare is better than ten miles on bare-back ponies. What do you say?"

There was no reply at first. The men looking at me with what I felt was unmitigated astonishment, though it was hard to account for, as all Western men are hospitable in camp. At last the man who had spoken first said slowly to the others:

"Seems to me, boys, that this offer is meant to be straight and square, and as things will be healthy for two hours at least, I shall get down, and risk it."

And get down he did, without a word to me, his friends following his example. The action was satisfactory; but I was a trifle disappointed, for, though I had not offered my hospitality with the object of being thanked, and the men appeared to belong to a low type of cowboy, of whom much in the way of politeness is not to be expected, still a word of acknowledgement would have done no harm. My thoughts travelled in this direction a very little way, however, for I had not gone more than a dozen steps towards my cabin, whither I

proceeded to lead my visitors, before a voice at my elbow said quietly:

"Some years ago, I read a story about a cuss called the Good Samaritan, which pleased me very much. I didn't know that there were any living now. I guess I was wrong."

I laughed, and looked up.

"Thanks; have you fallen among thieves, then?"

"Yes—or Indians, rather—a derved sight worse."

This was interesting, but somewhat incredible.

"I thought Indians were peaceable folk enough now."

"Then you've not left the Old Country long, I presume."

There was a twinkling in his eyes as he spoke, though every step cost his bleeding feet a painful effort.

"I don't go by my own experience," I replied shortly, "though I've been out nine months. This was what my partner, who has been here some years, told me."

"I see. Ay, ranche-folk do take that line, sometimes. We—el, sir, I guess you'll be able to open his eyes, before to-morrow morning."

We had now reached camp. I entered first, and unrolled my blankets.

"Sit down, gentlemen, I'll picket your ponies out. Here's a panful of bacon, and some coffee, which you can have for a start; when I come back I'll cook some more."

My visitors nodded in reply, and promptly threw themselves upon my bed. When I returned, however, I found all three busy cooking, under the direction of the one who had constituted himself spokesman, and who, as he was invariably addressed by the others as boss, was evidently a person of some authority.

As I came in, he pointed to my pan, which was untouched.

"We're waiting for you to clean that out, Colonel. We didn't reckon to eat your supper, as well as run through your camp. Come, set to, and then we'll make a start."

I was touched at this; a consideration rarely seen in a hungry traveller with as rough an aspect as my friend; though I refused, of course, to take advantage of it. A little later, when we were all sitting round a smoking pile of crisp, sweet beans, and making play with knife and spoon, as only hungry stockmen can, I looked at this fellow carefully, feeling the more

freedom to do so, as he rarely raised his eyes above his plate, and seemed entirely engrossed with satisfying the cravings of nature.

He was a man of about thirty-six years of age, five feet ten inches in height, though looking taller by reason of an erect carriage, and a very well-proportioned figure. His clothes, now torn and discoloured, appeared to have been of good stuff originally: a blue flannel shirt, ornamented with beads, delicately worked into the stuff, and well-fitting trousers of the best buckskin.

He had a large head, and a square, strong face, half covered by a black beard and heavy moustache. The chin, so far as one could judge from the beard which concealed it, seemed very massive; the mouth somewhat wide, containing rows of white teeth. Later on, when I knew my man better, I found that in times of excitement, these white teeth gleamed fiercely through the mass of hair, though, as a rule, his lips were tightly compressed.

It was a terrible mouth and jaw, and the hollow cheeks above—for the face was very thin—heightened the effect. It was the mouth of one, whose first instinct from infancy must have been combativeness, which had received encouragement and stimulus—I write from after knowledge—as he journeyed through life, until it had become a second nature.

Yet, when I glanced at his eyes and forehead, I forgot, for a moment, the impression which the lower part of the face had given me. The forehead was broad and square, though the black hair above grew low; and the eyes, set somewhat far apart, and deeply in their sockets, were of a peculiar grey colour—large, clear, and keen. The brows were black, and when the teeth below shone white—I am still writing from after knowledge—became a straight even line above the nose, and, at such times, the eyes glowed like lights burning in some dark cavern. A strange face, full of queer contrasts. A face most men would fear and distrust; for the grey eyes, never at rest, wore a watchful expression such as one sees in a beast of prey. Yet, it must have been exceedingly handsome, before it became so hard, for the features were regular, and the complexion a clear healthy brown.

We finished our suppers, and I retired to the spring to wash the things; the men came also and bathed their feet. Not a word had been spoken yet by my visitors

as to the cause of their miserable condition, except the allusion of the black-haired man to Indians; but Western manners strictly forbade inquiry on my part, and hunger and weariness prevented communicativeness on theirs. I knew, however, that after supper I should hear what had befallen them; and, sure enough, when we had concluded our business at the water, and I had provided pipes and tobacco all round, my curiosity was quickly satisfied.

"I suppose our present fix gave you an idea that we'd been deserting from the nearest fort?" began the black-haired man abruptly, as he balanced himself on my three-legged stool—the only piece of furniture in the place.

"I shouldn't have blamed you," he went on without waiting for a reply; "we looked mean enough. However, it's not so. We've been corralled by Apaches; and only by rare luck we three parted company without losing our scalps. There was another man; but he—he was unlucky."

He paused here for a moment to re-light his pipe, which refused to draw, and had to be laid aside until he had finished his narrative.

"It's not often that Indians get hold of white men in broad daylight; but we'd been on the lope for ten hours before we struck the ford at Grant's old place, ten miles down the Chicareeka River, and, though it was only noon, we felt just about dead beat; so, instead of snoozing gently, when the horses were watered, we slept like so many calves. When we awoke we found ourselves corralled. Fifty red devils in war-paint were smiling at us, and half-a-dozen were busy with a nice, warm fire."

The speaker's eyes dilated, and he bent forward to lay a hand upon my knee.

"Young man, you are fresh from the East, and I desay you have often heard talk by the mile about the 'poor Indians.' When you go back again, just get into the pulpit somewhere and tell those pitiful folk what Indians in this country do. Here were we—four of us—not one of us so much as shot an Indian in our lives, except in fair fight—stripped as you see, tied up with raw hide (look at my feet) and after waiting a few minutes while the fire burnt up, compelled to sit by and watch another man hung by the arms to a bough of a tree over a slow fire of red-hot cinders. Then—yes, then—the fun began. Good

Heaven, the devilment there is in the red man!"

The narrator paused to pass his hand across his eyes, and I heard him murmur softly to himself, "Poor Tom!" He then continued in the curt tone in which he began.

"Yes; I've fought the Comanche down South, and rubbed against Sioux and Cheyenne in the North, but this is the first time I've seen the Apache. I believe he's the worst of the crowd, though it's hard to tell. I guess these cusses, however, hadn't been on the war-path long, and lost their heads a bit; anyhow, they got so excited with Tom—the man over the fire—that we were forgotten, and when I managed to slip a hand loose and cut the raw hide with a knife I had in a back pocket, we crept to our horses unnoticed, and they did not smell us out until we were well on the track. That's our day's work."

The man stopped speaking with a cough that showed his story was told, and again bent over the fire to manipulate the refractory pipe.

I was now feeling exceedingly uncomfortable. The adventure had been described very simply, yet in a forcible way that made it seem very vivid and real. After a minute's thought, while the other two visitors puffed in silence, calm and stolid, and the one who had spoken devoted his attention energetically to my corn-cob pipe, I began to ask questions:

"And this occurred only ten miles off?"

"Yes."

"Then, perhaps I may expect a visit from these gentry myself?"

"It is very possible."

I whistled.

"Will they follow you?"

"They may."

"And if they strike my camp, must I expect the same treatment as your friend?"

"Perhaps; but it's uncertain. You're a sheepman. Tom was a cowboy. Indians hate cowboys. If they come upon you at all, it will be in a night raid, probably; but there's nothing sure. They may be thirty miles away now. They may be following here. This is a well-guarded settlement, and as soon as we get to town the red devils will have to skip about more'n enough; and so they may keep quiet, except where a horse can be stolen without much trouble."

By this time the pipe was cleaned

and in full blast, and the smoker subsided into a placid silence. I was left to my own thoughts, which were not of the most cheerful nature. Presently the other men gaped and stretched themselves.

"Boys, you'd better nap it for a couple of hours," said the one with the corn-cob pipe. "The moon won't rise before midnight."

"A pious idea, boss. But who'll keep watch? We don't want to be lit on again."

"I have my pipe to finish, and will manage it with this man. You turn in."

They did so, promptly. I watched them curiously, as each rolled himself in a blanket; and then I glanced at my friend by the fire. There was a vast difference between his bearing and theirs, though neither of the others were ordinary-looking men. One was a big fellow, with red hair and a large nose, that had been broken at some time or other, and still had a ghastly white scar across the bridge. His complexion was of the ruddiest, his lips full, and his eyes small and set close together; he was, therefore, not pleasant to look at. But there was a rude strength about his big, bullet head and broad shoulders. He would be an unpleasant enemy. The third man was much younger than his companions. He was very good-looking; with light brown hair, which he wore long, and a curling, silky moustache. Yet there was a sinister look in his handsome blue eyes, a set and twist of the lips, as he sat silently by and helped himself to what he required, that sadly spoilt his beauty. I had not the remotest notion of what he was at that time, but I found his face haunting me, and at this present moment, eight years afterwards, it does so still. I have never seen another like it; I hope I never may.

That evening, however, I thought little about the matter, for the man on the three-legged stool was looking at me with a quiet, contemplative gaze, which seemed to go directly down to the very centre of my being, and come out finally somewhere about the small of my back. Yet I liked it. It neither frightened me, nor made me distrustful. I was altogether predisposed in favour of this man.

First, you see, I appreciated immensely his way of acknowledging the small hospitality I had shown him. Next, I was much impressed by his courtesy in insisting that I should reserve my supper for my own consumption, for it was easy to see that this action on his part was not approved of

by his companions. Moreover, I had enjoyed a good supper myself, and had heard just enough about the danger of an Indian attack, to make me feel sociably inclined toward anyone.

It was not long, therefore, before we were talking freely together. We drew nearer to the fire and heaped on wood; filled and emptied our pipes several times, and talked on and on, neither becoming drowsy, nor anxious for repose.

I have given, as clearly and explicitly as I can, my reasons for liking this grim stranger with the restless, watchful eyes. But there are always things which a man does that he cannot explain, and what followed after we drew close together in those two hours before midnight I can give no satisfactory reason for. I can only state the bare fact, that while the other men slept, I sat before the red embers of my camp-fire, and gave my companion pretty well all the particulars of my past life, including some which few of my most intimate friends in England were aware of, not forgetting hopes and plans for the future. And he listened intently, only putting in a curt remark at intervals, generally in the form of a question, yet with every word showing a quiet, direct interest in the subject that drew me on, almost in spite of myself.

Just before midnight, a curious thing happened. I had paused in the full flood of my narrative to scrape the fire together, and my companion was slowly filling his pipe.

"So your partner is an Englishman?" he said. "Which part of the Old Country does he come from?"

"London; his sisters live there now."

"And how many has he?"

"Two."

"Of whom this young lady, who is coming out to you, is one, I presume?"

"Yea."

"I see." He was now hunting for a suitable cinder wherewith to rekindle his pipe. He found one, raised his head, and between the puffs said slowly:

"You have not told me her name yet. Do you mind doing so?"

I smiled. We had been engaged two years, and were to be married in three months. Yes, I would tell him her name.

"Laura Temple."

He started; the burning wood dropped from his hand, and fell upon his knee; then he sat perfectly still, looking at me with rigid jaws and wide-open eyes. My astonishment may be conceived.

"Good Lord!" I exclaimed, "do you know her?"

He took his pipe out of his mouth before answering, and I saw that he had nearly bitten the cane through. A colder voice, however, was never heard, as he replied:

"I know London well. I am an Englishman myself, by birth. Some years ago I came across a family of that name. It is not uncommon. Is this Jack Temple, of Eagle Tail Rancho, your partner?"

"Certainly. You are acquainted with him?"

"By name. Where are you going to locate?"

"Near Smythe's old place on the El Gato Creek. The house is more than half built already; I have six Mexicans at work upon it now."

"It is to be of adobe, then. Nothing better in this country, though expensive to begin with."

Before I could reply, he bent over the nearest sleeper and touched his arm. The man sat up at once.

"Time to move, Pete. The moon's rising. Wake Kit."

A light tap on the shoulder did this, and my visitors prepared to depart. Those who had been sleeping stretched themselves, yawned, and made their way to the horses outside, with a simple "adios." The third man waited until they had gone, then gripped my hand with a pressure that made me realize, for the first time, what it must have been like to be held by a gauntlet of steel.

"I spoke about the Good Samaritan a few hours ago," he said heartily. "That was a poor way of putting the thing, for you've given me something better than charity. We shall meet again, I dare say, one of these days, and I shan't forget that I have a debt to pay. Adios."

He went outside, and I was about to follow, when he turned abruptly, and stepping back into the cabin, shut the door behind him.

"I forgot one thing," he said quickly, fixing my eye in his queer intent way, his head thrown a little back as if he were criticising a picture, and his right hand holding my arm just below the elbow. "I told you that, if the Apaches came at all, it would be at night. You may have trouble, so keep a spry look-out when the moon's bright. And, above all, mind this"—here the grip of the fingers on my arm tightened painfully—"if you get fast asleep some time, and only wake to hear

the second whoop, and see a red devil coming at you through that door, don't stop to handle a pistol. I see you carry a sharp knife; use *that*, first on the Apache, and then upon yourself. It'll come to the same thing in the end, and will save you a bad hour. Remember poor Tom!"

He was off, and the three men galloped away at a pace somewhat different from that at which they arrived. I leant against my door-post, and meditated. How much of this talk about Indians was bunkum? What a start the fellow gave when Laura's name was mentioned! I must describe him carefully to her. Why, I had never even found out his name! I bit my lip, and changed my position uneasily. Here was a fine state of things. I, twenty-four years old, of sound mind, had allowed a stranger to worm out of me all my family news, without receiving one iota of information in return, except his adventures since the hour of noon. I groaned. What a madly idiotic thing to do! For all I knew, my story, with picturesque additions, might be spread half over the settlement in the next fortnight. A pretty business! However, it was done, and I must hope for the best. At any rate, as I was very tired, and it was past midnight, the thing to be done now was to go to sleep. This I did, in rather less than five minutes, all recollection of the cheering and suggestive advice of my dark-haired visitor having passed out of my mind.

It must have been, as far as I can calculate, about an hour later—not more—that I woke from a confused jumble of dreams with a start, as if I had received an electric shock. I lay still for a moment, with my eyes shut, a dull, oppressive sense somewhere about me, that something had happened, or was about to happen, which I ought to be doing something to prevent; what—I could not tell. As my ideas became clearer, this oppression of spirits gradually changed to vague terror, and a cold perspiration broke over me. Yet still I knew not what could be the cause. A few seconds passed; then, like a burning coal dropped upon my forehead, came remembrance of the stranger's warning.

The Indians! And I was alone—quite alone!

Yet I might be wrong. I had heard no sound. It was fancy; it was nightmare. No! Faintly from the west, but distinct and unmistakable, came a long-drawn, plaintive wail, the howl of a prairie-wolf—the cry of the Indian scout. True, it was a

long way off, but what of that? I could not run away. The only point was, whether it might not be a genuine wolf. But this would soon be ascertained, for I had picked up enough prairie-lore to know that, if this cry were an Indian's, it would soon be answered from an exactly opposite direction. With my heart in my mouth, I lay and listened. Five, ten, fifteen seconds passed. No sound. My breath came more easily; my pulse slackened its feverish speed. I even winked twice, thinking that I might really be more than half asleep; and I was just about to rise and shake myself. When—"Cruk—Cruk, Cru—uk."

The coyote's short bark, with its concluding howl, struck upon my ear like the knell of fate.

It came in an exactly opposite direction from the first. I sighed, and tried to move my right hand. My knife lay a few inches from it, yet I was so much overcome by this rigid, involuntary horror, that I had not strength enough to grasp it. I cannot say how long I remained like this; it seemed to be many hours, though in reality it could only have been a few minutes. I thought I could feel fingers moving on my hair, and hear soft breathing at my bed-side. I knew the Indians were about me, and longed to get up and strike, if it were only one good blow; yet, as if held by bands of iron, I could move neither hand nor foot. At last my senses brought me one distinct impression: the crushing of grass, the soft, regular tread of approaching feet. As this sound became more distinct, I ceased to feel the fingers in my hair. My circulation began to bestir itself with every breath I drew; the life-blood coursed through my veins. My right hand was free, and I grasped my knife; the left hand became less numb, and the fingers curled joyfully round the hilt of my revolver. As I touched the familiar weapon, the deadly sensation of helplessness passed away altogether. I bounded to my feet and listened. Swish, swish; the step was outside the cabin now. There was a moment's pause, and then a figure appeared in the doorway. Raising my knife, I sprang forward with a yell.

"Steady there," said a quiet voice. "I ain't an Apache."

It was my visitor with the black beard. I am not very clear as to what happened then. A man whose nerves had been shaken as much as mine during the past few

minutes, is rather apt to lose his head when the scare is over. I have a shrewd idea that I fainted; for I can remember dropping my pistol, and feeling the cabin twisting and whirling about me, and then coming to myself upon my back, with someone holding a wet rag to my temples. Thoroughly ashamed to be caught in such a predicament, I tried to sit up and laugh.

"This is foolish work. I suppose my supper did not agree with me. I certainly thought my place was full of Indians, and that you had come to report progress about the slow fire."

My companion did not respond to this feeble attempt.

"Are you better?" he said briefly.

"Quite steady now, thanks; how ridiculous!"

"Wait a moment; let me feel your pulse. Ay, you seem to have worked round. I'll tell you my news now, for there's no time to be lost. Have you heard anything during the past few minutes?"

"I heard your step——"

"Nothing else?"

"A coyote howl or two."

"Oh, did you hear that? You know what it means, I s'pose?"

I looked intently into his face, upon which the moon shone brightly through the open doorway. Was he joking? He did not look like it.

"The Apache scout passing the word?"

"You're right." Then sharply: "Are you scared?"

"Not a bit."

And I spoke the truth. I was no longer alone. He looked at me steadily, his head on one side, as it had been when he said "good-bye."

"We-el, my friend, then I must inform you that about an hour hence, if we stay here, this dug-out will be blazing sky-high, and we—we shall be simmering gently. Therefore, you must pack up what you can carry, mount behind me on Leone there, and strike slick for the settlements. D'you see?"

I started. Until this moment I had not fully realised that he was serious.

"D'you see?" he repeated.

"Ye-es. But—but what will become of my sheep?"

Now that I was fully awake, things began to assume a new aspect altogether. If my property were confiscated, my life would not be worth much to me.

"H'm," he answered dubiously. "Indians arn't very partial to mutton if they

can get beef; but I dare say they'll have a bit of a feed."

"And about the rest? For they can't eat two thousand."

"The rest? We—el, I fear they'll go off on the dead jump. Either toward the river or the mesa; both, most likely; dividing into two or three bunches. No, it'll be rather a bad business for them, but it can't be helped. Are you ready?"

I thought over the thing for a moment, and then made up my mind.

"No, thanks."

"What's in the way? The pony won't kick us off."

"That's not it. I shall not leave my sheep to Apaches."

"But what good——"

"Wait. You would say that if I'm strung up, it won't help the stock much. No. But not long ago, you said a sheep-man was not in so much danger as a cow-boy. There's a chance that they might let me off. Then I thought of driving the sheep towards the home-rancho, so that if I were seized, the stock, with their heads in the right direction, might get home in safety. I'll chance it, thank you. You clear back to town."

I was off the bed now; all weakness gone. I had never felt better in my life.

My companion made no reply, but silently watched me as I opened a fire-proof cash-box under my pillow, and drew from it a packet of letters—the last Laura had written—and buckled on my revolver and knife. I was now ready to go.

We went outside together. How quiet and peaceful everything was! The air delightfully cool and sweet; the sky cloudless; and above our heads the moon, sailing clear and bright. There was little time to think of these things, however, for I glanced quickly at the sheep, and uttered an exclamation. They had arisen from their bedding-ground, as they will sometimes on a moonlight night, and were steadily trailing off in long lines—towards the home-rancho.

I turned my face the other way, and noticed that a fresh breeze was springing up from the west. Bright moonlight, and a strong wind in our favour; nothing could be better. I now thought of the man who had ridden back, at much risk, to warn me.

"Good-bye, sir. Don't think me ungrateful. But I cannot desert my sheep. They are all I have."

He was mounted by this time ; but to my surprise refused my proffered hand.

"I see," he replied gruffly. "And now we'll drop conversation. It'll be the safest plan. Maybe they will think this is merely a wandering flock, if they should hear the bells."

"But you are not coming with me?"

He grunted and turned his horse, saying, as he paced off to stir up some laggards on the hill :

"Good gosh, man, what sort of a hair-pin do you take me to be, in the devil's name? You see to the left side of the flock, and I'll keep up the right. Vamos, now."

He loped away, and we were presently in motion, the camp fading quickly away behind us, in the grey, ghostly haze.

On and on—not a word, not a look—each walking at a steady pace, urging the laggards gently, and carefully guiding the foremost by the winding creek which ran beside Eagle Tail Rancho, five miles away. On and on, until I could scarcely remember when the drive first began, and hardly expected it ever to end ; for, the first excitement being over, a great reaction of drowsy listlessness had set in. Thanks, however, to the bright moonlight and fresh wind, the sheep went on without stop or stay, now and then giving a gentle baa, but mostly in silence, only the soft rumble of their many feet breaking the stillness of the night. Suddenly I saw the vague outline of my companion's figure remain motionless ; then he wheeled toward me, and galloped up.

"Look," he said laconically, pointing to the west. Far, far behind us a red wavering light was creeping up, now rising, now falling, again rising, until it became a steady glare. It was my camp-house burning. The Indians were there.

We watched it silently, for a while. Then my friend observed meditatively :

"Well, the fun is over for to-night. Our scalps are safe. I'm glad we didn't leave the sheep."

"How far off are we?" I had lost all sense of distance.

"Four miles, good. See, the sheep have got wind of home now. Hear that baa? Those wethers at the head are making for the water below your partner's rancho. And I must go."

"But you will come in with me?" I said quickly. "I insist upon it ; you can't refuse if you've any decent feeling in you."

But he only smiled, and shook his head. "No, sir, not to-night. Your partner will be quite awakened up enough by you and your story, without seeing me. Adios. I have not paid my debt yet, I know. But I will one of these days. Adios!"

And away he rode without another word. I looked helplessly after him. Who was he? What was he? Why had I not asked his name? Well, it was too late to wish. I must follow my sheep, and retail the news of the day to Jack. I should think he would be somewhat astonished for once in his life.

CHAPTER II.

HOW I MET MIKE ALISON THE SECOND

TIME.

I WAS much mistaken when I imagined that the simple unvarnished tale I had to tell would disturb the equanimity of my partner, Jack Temple. He growled at being roused up so early in the morning, it was true ; but took no interest whatever in the identity of the queer stranger, and when I described the misadventures of my visitor and the burning of the cabin, he only shrugged his shoulders, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Ah—ha, Harry ; so you've brushed against the reds at last, and had your first taste of the bitters of Western life. I'm glad you came out of it with your hair on ; but you ran a tidy risk, by sticking to those sheep. Eh? I told you that Apaches were a mild race, did I? Well, so they are, four years out of five. And now that I think of it, exactly five years ago Heman's rancho, over the hill here, was burnt ; and half-a-dozen of us sat in this place expecting that our turn would come before morning. But it didn't. It's a terrible nuisance having the flock bundling home at this time of year. However, things will be quiet enough in a week, and then we'll rebuild the dug-out and put José in it. I've thought of making a small corral for the fine-grade rams, which are due in October, so you will have plenty of work for the next month. Then there'll be dipping and carting the furniture from Trinidad to your place, and after that—don't stand grinning there, you ape! Go and out some firewood. There's many a slip—and she's not out yet!"

The next four weeks passed quickly enough. I was working "to time." There were three hundred cedar posts, six feet

six inches in length, to be carted from the Mesa, two miles away, where they had been cut by a Mexican by contract, at the rate of five cents per post. Then three trenches had to be dug, two feet in depth, the width of the spade, and fifty feet in length. In these the posts were placed side by side, and the earth around them "tamped" down to give firmness and stability; and lastly a waggon-load of long saplings had to be cut from the banks of the Chicareeka River, a mile to the west of the Round Mound, and bound horizontally across the outer side of the wall of cedar.

One afternoon, in the fourth week after I left camp, I heard a halloo from the house. Jack was on the porch, his arms buried in a huge wash-tub, where some flannel shirts were undergoing a process of rough and ready scrubbing that spoke well for the stoutness of their material.

"Oh! say! Harry, have you seen the horses anywhere round? I guess they're off on the bust, as they've been running for a week. I want to go to Trinidad to-morrow. Only remembered it this morning."

He paused to wring out his shirt. The drift of his remarks was obvious.

"Shall I bring them in for you, and finish the corral to-morrow?"

"Yes. Hurry up. You won't have more than a clear hour before sundown, and the deuce only knows where you'll find the brutes. Keep to the mesa."

In ten minutes I was in the saddle, briskly loping toward Eagle Tail Mountain, only too glad to vary my employment.

Hunting horses, on the prairie, however, is like many other occupations in this world, a pleasant pastime to begin with, but, if not speedily attended with success, soon becoming a wearisome and disappointing task. I went first of all to the usual haunts of the ponies, but could find no sign of their presence. Then I worked westward, winding in and out of the foot of the mountain, scanning the rocks above, and the prairie below, and wondering, as I went on, whether it were possible for the perverse brutes to have climbed the mesa, and be feeding on the table-land; in which case there would be a hunt before me of tall dimensions. The wind blew cold and fresh, and reminded me that in my haste to be off, I had forgotten my coat, and that an evening ride should not be undertaken in shirt and canvas trousers only. There was no help for it though; these ponies must be found before dark. I pushed on faster, much to the disgust of my horse, a

cow-pony (that is, a pony trained to handle wild cattle), of mature age and experience, who, though he could stretch his long limbs when he pleased at a speed which many a colt might envy, was much adverse to going far from the stable at this time of day. His anxiety to return to hay and meditations was expressed by a passive edging round in the direction of the ranche, whenever he thought I was off my guard.

We were now about seven miles from home. To the north I could see my old camp, and the wind wafted a faint sea towards me, showing that José was already busy with his supper. This sight and sound reminded me of my last night at camp. It seemed far more than four weeks ago. I had ridden to Stockton several times since, and eagerly scanned the loafers about the saloon and the travellers busy with dinner in the restaurant below, hoping that I might chance to meet my friend again. But I had not found him, and, remembering the wandering propensities of the cowboy community, I doubted much if I should do so this summer.

I turned sharply to the left. The ground fell away rather steeply here, for nearly parallel with this side of the mesa ran the Chicareeka River, a narrow silver streak with high banks; in spring a turbid torrent, with the weight of the melted mountain snow upon it, and a place to be carefully avoided by the herder with a thirsty flock under his care.

The space between river and mesa became narrower and narrower, until it was a mere bridle-path. The sun had sunk to rest ten minutes ago, and my chances of finding these rambling horses before night began to look rather small. The prospect was not a pleasant one, for I could hardly go home without them, and the prairie is cold at night. On my left towered the mesa, gloomy and dark; on the right lay the river, a dark belt of green; beyond, the prairie, skirted by foot-hills, the snowy ridge of peaks looming in the dim distance. I was getting tired and cross, and relaxed my hold of the reins to change my seat. Instantly old Comanche turned his head to wheel on a homeward track. But, just as I was about to put him straight with somewhat unnecessary vigour, the old horse came round himself, and, to my great astonishment, began to step briskly forward, pricking up his ears and raising his crest as he advanced. I let him go his own pace, and waited patiently for the explanation of these proceedings.

Had we come upon the ponies at last? This was apparently the case, for Comanche neighed loudly at the moment, his call being answered from what seemed the depths of the mountain. No spur was needed now. With a long, swinging stride the old horse swept down the winding path, and brought himself to with a promptness rather inconvenient to his rider, before a narrow opening between two rugged cones of rock. A twitch of the bridle and touch of the heel sent him through it with great quickness, and, after following a narrow track for twenty yards or so, I found myself at the entrance of a spacious cañon.

I now saw the reason for Comanche's excitement. At the further end of a large semi-circle of thickly-growing grass were some twenty horses; two or three picketed out, the rest loose, all feeding for dear life on the fresh, green pasture. Nearer to me a huge camp-fire was blazing, round which were lounging a dozen men, and at the head of the cañon, where a narrow stream of water trickled among the rocks, was another man, kneeling and busily scraping the bottom of a large frying-pan with gravel.

Upon my appearance the loafers at the fire turned their heads, and two or three sat up and stared at me; but none made a move in my direction except the man with the pan. He promptly desisted from his labours and came towards me with a steady stride.

It was now dusk; but before the camp-master had advanced within speaking distance, I recognised my old acquaintance with the restless eyes. I greeted him warmly, and was answered in a quiet, composed tone; but the grip he gave my hand, and his gleaming smile, were more expressive than a flow of words.

"Out late!"

"Yes; I'm hunting horses. I suppose you have not seen two mares in this locality?"

"A bay and a black, branded with a T on the near fore shoulder?"

"The identical team. Where are they?"

"In my bunch here. They joined it an hour ago."

"How very lucky! Will you give me a hand to cut them out? I'm learning to ride by degrees, but am not perfect yet, my business being sheep-raising; and among these rocks, at this hour, the job will be an awkward one."

"Won't you camp here to-night then,

and cut 'em out in the morning? Your partner will know that you can take care of yourself."

While he was speaking I sniffed a delightful odour of broiled steak. It was an offer not to be refused.

"Thanks, I will."

"I should say, by-the-by," he said hastily, "that we're rough here. Do you mind that?"

This was amusing. What did he take me for?

"I hope not. It is true that I've not been quite a year out; but for all that I'm a Western stockman, and not afraid of Western company."

He nodded, and without further remark led the way to a large rock, where lay blankets and a saddle.

"Put your gear here, with mine. We'll sleep together. Turn the pony loose; he'll run with the rest; then come to supper."

I did as I was bid, and presently made my way to the fire, and stretched myself at ease, while my friend, with the assistance of two others—whom I recognised to be the men I had housed at sheep-camp, and who nodded slightly in reply to my greeting—prepared the meal.

It was a good one. Juicy beef-steak, eaten with Mexican cakes, made of dough and a pinch of soda, kneaded and pressed out to wafer-like thinness by the fingers, placed in the pan on bubbling melted bacon-fat, and fried to a delicate crispness—all washed down by coffee which a fastidious Frenchman would have found no fault with. After this, pipes and conversation.

The talk was at first confined to the other men, the camp-master and myself puffing in silence; and it was not long before I began to realise vividly the significance of my friend's allusion to rough company.

I had been accustomed to hear subjects freely discussed round a camp-fire that should be left alone; but there was a keen and brutal relish of sickening and disgusting details to-night, which made my face burn to the tips of my ears.

I was pleased to see that my friend took no part in the talk; and I turned eagerly to him as he removed his pipe to ask a question in a pause of the conversation:

"Been in town lately?"

"Last week."

"Any news?"

"Yes, they say Dempster's got all his horses back but one. Poor beggar! He's

had a hard time of it. Twenty ponies taken in one night, and one a mare worth five hundred dollars. He had to go as far as Albuquerque before he could get her."

My companion nodded; then leaned back comfortably against a little hillock behind him, again removed his pipe from his lips, and observed coolly:

"Yes, I heard that old Dempster found his stable empty one morning. Kind of served the old cuss right, didn't it?"

I sat bolt upright, and put my pipe away. It was a subject upon which I held a very strong opinion, and which I now proceeded to ventilate, my eyes fixed steadily upon the burning log at my feet.

"Served him right, you say? Well, I've heard that remark before, and I must confess I cannot see the justice of it a bit. Take for granted that he's a mean, grasping, hard-hearted curmudgeon; and that if he'd had a grain of right feeling in him he would have sent someone on his first horse for a doctor the other day, when his cowboy's child fell ill; yet you cannot prove it to be right or reasonable that a band of irresponsible men should swoop down directly afterwards, and rob him of every horse he possessed."

"But, if this were the only way in which he could be adequately punished! Old Dem is as hard and mean as a Government mule, and rich as he can stick. His horses are the only thing he cares about—besides, after all, you say he got 'em back."

"No thanks to those who stole them, though. See what he paid, and then, remember what happened to Jake Blundell, the County Sheriff, when he came up to the horse-stealers with his posse."

There was a movement behind me. The conversation among the men had ceased. They were apparently about to turn in. Some had risen to their feet; and were fumbling in their belts. All were silent, and everyone, though that I scarcely noticed, was looking fixedly at me.

"It was the greatest farce that was ever heard of," I went on, warming into my subject; "the behaviour of that Sheriff and his posse. Thirty men, well-armed and well-mounted, all cowed and turned from what they had solemnly sworn to do, by a dozen, and the only excuse—a fear of the leader of the gang, Mike Alison. This man faced the Sheriff, I believe, alone, with his men posted among the rocks. Fine courage! thirty afraid of one! Yet it is said that Jake Blundell was a Texan ranger in the Mexican War, and is as brave a man as

ever lived. I can't understand it. Can you?"

"Wa-al, it appears somewhat out of the way, certainly," he replied slowly. "But it is true that Jake's clear grit. A better Sheriff was never appointed."

"Then why was he afraid of Mike Alison?" I said sharply. "I am astonished at hearing so much of this man, as if he were the only one in this part of the world who could shoot. There's a reward of five thousand dollars offered for him alive or dead, yet he is able by the mere power of his name and reputation to walk into a town in broad daylight, and never a word spoken, or a revolver raised! Perhaps it is because I've not been out of England long; but that such men as he and his gang should live a week unhung, in the midst of a respectable community such as this, seems to me monstrous."

I now paused for breath, expecting my friend to reply; but, instead of his quiet voice, there came another directly behind me, harsh in tone and hoarse with passion.

"Is that so, stranger? Then, by heaven! when your tongue slips again, be more careful who you're blattin' to!"

I sprang up, breathlessly.

The pion log was blazing, and for fifteen yards around it was as light as day. Standing within three feet of me was a tall man, holding a cocked revolver in his right hand, and a bare knife in his left. By his long, brown hair, and handsome face, I knew him to be the youngest of my visitors at camp, Kit Blossie.

A little further away were the others, each caressing a knife or pistol, though only Kit's were formally presented at me. All were eyeing me, however, with the impressive and critical interest I remembered noticing in the face of a pig-killer at a Chicago hog-factory, when his first victim was being placed into position. Of course the truth flashed across my mind instantly. The very men I had been so vigorously apostrophising were before me. I set my teeth, and tried to control myself, and do the right thing: which, without doubt, ought to have been an ample apology. Alas! a free tongue was not my only weakness; and there was something so rasping, and contemptuous about the tone of Kit Blossie, that, despite my consciousness of being in fault, and notwithstanding the fact that my life hung by the slenderest thread that a life may, my temper rose to boiling point, and no apology would come; only hot, hasty words.

"Well, sir, I expressed the opinion for which I was asked. I did not know what your profession was. You may go to the devil!"

There was a general laugh at this. A low, quiet laugh. The muscles of the grim faces—looking darker and more sinister than even nature had intended, lit up as they were by the flickering fire-light—never relaxed a hair's breadth. The sound which came from them was dry, and more significant than oaths.

The man in front of me seemed to grow taller, as, with a smart click, he brought his revolver to the ready, pointing the muzzle at my feet.

"So!" he said sneeringly. "Then we must let go, I s'pose. Wait till I count ten, boys. If he's on his knees before, and ready to repeat the words I'll put into his mouth, p'raps we'll forgive his blasted impertinence. If not——" he concluded his sentence with a grim chuckle. There was an approving murmur from the others. Then Kit began to count, raising his pistol inch by inch.

"One."

I shifted my position slightly. Kit stepped quickly forward, and stood directly over me.

"Two."

My breath came quick and short. I withdrew my eyes from him, with an effort, and looked round. Every man but one was holding a revolver after the manner of Kit Blossie, and as "Three" was pronounced, raised the muzzle of his weapon some six inches. The only one passive in the matter was the man who had befriended me at camp. His face was turned away, and he appeared to be perfectly unconscious that anything unusual was going on. I felt a keen pang of disappointment. True, he was but one among thirteen, and if he should take my part, might share my fate. Nevertheless, when I remembered his parting words a month ago, it was hard to be deserted in time of need.

"Four."

I turned again, and faced the man who spoke. The first sensation of helpless rage was wearing off. My nerves hardened, and my pulse grew steady before the sharp, cold edge of imminent danger. What should I do?

"Five, Six, Seven."

He was counting faster; the revolver rising higher and higher, pointing now just below my breast.

Should I submit? It was a revolting thing to do; besides, it would be of little use, if the stories I had heard of the refined and relentless cruelty of the horse-stealers were true.

"Eight."

Yet I could not stand still, and be butchered like a calf in a slaughter-house. I measured my enemy carefully, and raised myself on tip-toe. I was two inches shorter than he, but broader in the shoulders; I remembered old college days, when I had held a boxing championship for two terms; and I drew a long, deep breath.

"Nine."

The word was spoken slowly; and the revolver was now on a level with my chin; but he got no further. With all my force I sprang upon him, delivering a heavy blow on the upper part of his nose.

My action was so sudden, and, I believe, so unexpected, that, though Kit pulled the trigger of his revolver, it was too late, and the bullet flew wide of its mark. It was a touch and go, for the man had a knife, which he knew well how to use, and he was big and strong; as it was, however, excitement gave a force to my blows, which proved too much for him. At the first he staggered, at the second, a right-hander on the line of the jawbone, just below the ear, he threw up his arms, and measured his length on the grass.

Flushed with the victory, I turned to the rest; then caught my breath, for eleven pairs of eyes were glaring at me, meaning business; and, below, eleven revolvers were pointed at my head.

Crack! The report echoed and re-echoed with the murderous clang; but I fell on my back, unhurt. Someone had gripped my ankle, as I turned from settling with Kit Blossie, and tripped me up. The bullets flew over my head.

As I lay, half-stunned by my fall, I felt fingers round my throat, and a knee upon my chest. Then came the click of a pistol-lock.

They would not have much trouble now. I was helpless in very truth. I kept my teeth and eyes tightly closed. Why didn't they do their business?

And now I heard someone speaking just above me. It was not Kit's voice, but the quiet tone of the man whom I thought had left me to my fate.

"Boys," it said—and sweeter music a poor wretch never heard—"there's been enough of this. I like fun, but we don't want any more to-night. Did you speak,

Pete Worrall? Well, out with it, then!" An emphatic dissent had interrupted my friend's last words, and I heard the third of my camp-companions chime in.

"P'raps you don't know, Boss, that Kit's about dead?—his face smashed in, any way!"

"Is that so?" was the quiet reply. "Well, I'm glad to hear it, very glad to hear it. It is about time he should learn that bully-ragging don't always pay. Have you anything more to say?"

There was no answer. After waiting a few seconds, my friend continued:

"I said, boys, that there'd been enough of this; and I meant it. This is a free country, and everyone has a right to his opinion. Besides, this boy here, when Pete and Kit and myself escaped from the Apaches by the skin of our teeth the other day, took us in, gave us the best of what he had, and treated us as not another ranchman living would have done. So just remember this, all of you: If there's a man here, or anywhere, who hankers after the shortest cut to hell, he'd better try to put a hole into Harry Thornton—this boy here. I'll take care he ain't disappointed, and I generally keep my word. Now turn in."

The grip on my throat slackened, and the knee was withdrawn from my chest. Accepting the hint, I got up. The log of pitch-pine was now a mass of red embers, but there was still light enough to distinguish the figures of the horse-stealers. The group was scattered now, two or three unrolling blankets, the rest sitting lazily before the fire, as if they had never left it. I noticed the crowd very little, however, my thoughts full of one thing only—the identity of the man who had now saved my life for the second time. He was standing near me, and at this moment passed me my hat. I pressed his hand. If I am to confess the truth, there was a lump at the back of my throat that made a considerable effort necessary and before I could speak distinctly.

"Thank you," I said; "thank you for what you've done to-night. I don't know what to say about it. There's nothing I can say, except that if I can ever do the same for you I will. But there is one thing I must know. What is your name? I told you mine. Won't you return the confidence?"

I was still holding his hand, but now he drew it away, and I heard him give a short, sharp sigh.

"Yes, I'll tell you my name if you like,

though you'll wish you'd kept your hand to yourself. We can never be friends, Thornton. *I am Mike Alison.*"

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE NEWS CAME TO STOCKTON.

So the man, to whom I had given my fullest confidence, was Mike Alison himself; one who, as the phrase goes, "kills a man for the pleasure of seeing him fall." This was a revelation calculated to afford material for painful reflection. Yet, perhaps, because I was tired; perhaps on account of the sudden transition from the sudden extremity of danger to a feeling of perfect safety, I slept the whole night through. I cannot remember ever passing a better night than this when I lay on the ground side by side with Mike Alison. I dropped asleep two minutes after my head touched the pillow, and the sun was up before I opened my eyes again. I expected a little awkwardness at breakfast, and, in fact, not much conversation was put in. I looked round for Kit Blossie, but he was not to be seen, nor was Pete Worrall. For reasons of their own they kept apart, and the other men made no allusion to last night's incident.

As the last rasher of bacon disappeared, and the men began to fill our pipes, Mike Alison called one of them.

"Tim," he said quietly, as if it were not a command, but an invitation, "get on your pony and cut out those two that we picked up last night. When you've done that, rope the bay horse with the T brand and bring him here."

In fifteen minutes my ponies were on the prairie, and at the mouth of the cañon I was holding Comanche, ready to go. Mike Alison had been as good as his word. I grasped his hand warmly in farewell; he returned the pressure, and smiled.

"Adios, young man. Well—shake hands then, if you will. Remember now what I said: here men fight with pistols, not fists. This is not the Old Country. When you want to let out upon some other fellow, shoot him, don't knock him down. Adios."

He turned and left me.

An hour's brisk gallop brought me to the ranche. I prefer not to repeat Jack's remarks when he heard my adventures of the previous night. There are some people who can never hear of a friend doing a foolish thing without commenting upon it in a manner which makes him feel like a bear

on a hot plate. Suffice it to say that I became a bear on a hot plate. Happily for me, Jack had no time to make me dance, because he was in a hurry to get to town.

And there was a letter for me, oh, great Heavens! There was a letter!

What did it matter if Jack laughed and chaffed, and made me feel what a hot-headed fool I had made myself when I found that letter.

Did I say, before we began to talk so much about Mike Alison, that Laura—my Laura, you know—had actually left Liverpool? She had, and now she wrote me the sweetest and fondest of letters—cruelly short—just to say that in five days—five days, think of it, only four days after the arrival of her note—she would be with me.

"And, dear Harry," she said, "if you are not too busy"—too busy! as if I could be too busy—"you can ride over to Stockton"—Stockton was the nearest coach-station—"and meet us. Till then, good-bye, my dearest Harry."

She wrote from New York, where they were to stay two or three days before leaving Eastern civilisation.

She was accompanied by her guardian and uncle, Mr. Geoffrey Temple. It was plucky of the old man, at sixty-five, to travel all the way from London to New Mexico, in order to see his niece married with his own eyes. But he was fond of her, which I daresay was the reason why he had made himself so confoundedly disagreeable about the engagement. Certainly he did his level best to break it off and to prevent our union.

He honestly considered that I was going, with my eyes open, to doom Laura to a life of hardship, danger, and poverty, and that I ought to have left England without speaking to her again. And, of course, I could never forget that when my poor father died suddenly, and I left college with only a thousand pounds in the world, Mr. Temple did all in his power to prevent me from seeing her, though we had been engaged a year, and my darling had told him she would never give me up. Indeed, had I not seen her eager, tearful face watching for me at the window at Temple Hall, I should have gone out West without a word, and we might never have met again.

What did all this matter? The good old man gave way when he saw that Laura's happiness depended upon it; and,

besides, he never had any personal objections to me; and I am glad to bear testimony to the splendid courage of a man of his age, accustomed to a quiet English country life, who deliberately undertook, for the sake of his niece, a journey of five thousand miles, and cheerfully went through discomforts such as few quiet and orderly Englishmen ever dream of.

Oh, but there was work to do within the next four days! The ranche had to be cleaned, and scrubbed, and set to rights from top to bottom; and then there was the "dipping," an important process which has to be performed once a year by the sheepmen of the Western territories. You will understand the trouble when I tell you that every single animal of the whole flock—in our case, five thousand in number—has to be immersed completely in hot tobacco juice.

At our ranche, this year, I do not believe we should ever have got through the business at all—for the wretched people who supplied the tobacco sent it a week later than they should have done, our tank leaked, and our furnace wouldn't burn properly—if it had not been our good fortune to secure the services of Kirk Troy. Why Kirk Troy was called by everybody Kirk Troy the Idiot, puzzled me until he had lived with us a week or more. He was a tall, handsome fellow, broad in the shoulder and lean in the flank, with a cadaverous, melancholy face, of which a pendulous under-lip, hanging loosely when he was not speaking, was the only feature to convey a suggestion that he was not quite "all there." His nose was large and prominent, starting out suddenly from between a pair of mild brown eyes: and he was the most patient, docile, hard-working creature ever seen. Yet, though patience and docility were marked characteristics of Kirk Troy, his nature had another side.

There was a story that a few years before, Kirk being at the time alone, in sheep camp, an unfortunate Mexican stole into his cabin with intent to pilfer; there he was found by the master, in the act of cutting the throat of a troublesome puppy, which had disputed his entrance. This Mexican was never seen again. A traveller passing the camp next day saw a mound of new earth at the roadside, and asked its meaning. "Well, sir," said Kirk, "there was a funeral here this morning. I am fond of dogs;" and he mildly asked the traveller if he would spend the night

in his cabin. This man found, however, that he had urgent business elsewhere.

Apart from this anecdote, a fellow with more blameless reputation than Kirk Troy it would have been hard to find. Yet he had a history. He was the son of a Californian farmer, who had immigrated into New Mexico, to raise sheep when Kirk was still a boy. At eighteen, he was the owner of a flock of a thousand head of Mexican ewes, and with capital prospects, being a quiet and sober fellow and already a first-rate stockman. He had three brothers, who settled down on farms of their own, one by one, leaving him, the youngest, tending his sheep alone, living the solitary camp-life most of the year of which I had just been having an experience.

Kirk Troy was a shy and reserved man, though at that time as sane as any one. People laughed, and said they pitied any girl who should care for him, as he would never have the pluck to propose. They were mistaken. A young lady, Miss Jenny Maliber, of St. Louis, came to a neighbouring town to spend the summer. Kirk saw a good deal of her, and from the first day they met, he began to lose his nervous shyness. She was clever, vivacious, and pretty; he, gentle in manner, handsome in face, with the physical strength of six ordinary men. That Jenny was a flirt was undeniable, but this did not prevent Kirk from loving her; his affection being returned—for a time. By-and-by they became engaged; then she went home, and he settled down with strong hands and will to make his pile and win her. But it was never to be. A month from the time she arrived in St. Louis, Miss Jenny had nearly forgotten her frontier lover; in another month she only remembered the tie between them sufficiently to feel that it was insupportable; and she wrote asking to be set free. No one saw Kirk for months after this letter reached him—the first he had ever received in his life. Then he quietly told his friends what had happened, and asked for the subject not to be touched upon by any one. He never complained, and no one dared to say a word against her in his presence. His way of life remained unaltered; he went on tending his sheep in camp, and appeared at intervals among his fellow men the same gentle creature he had always been. People wondered, even his own brothers, that he took it so quietly. Quietly! They did not know what was going on in that silent brain.

For seven years Kirk went his solitary

way, and then it became evident to everybody that his mind was affected. He stutted slightly in his speech; he would sit for hours, if he had nothing particular to do, crouching in a chair, staring vacantly before him, motionless, except for a ceaseless movement of the hands, now passing one over the other, now interlacing the fingers tightly, and again rubbing the palms together, round and round with a slow regular motion. The break-up of the intellect came gradually. Even when I knew him, a year after it had been first noticed, he would behave at times exactly like other people, and, as I have already stated, his power of handling sheep was unsurpassable. We, therefore, considered ourselves fortunate to be able to engage him through the winter months as foreman herder.

With Kirk Troy's help the dipping was concluded the day before I was due in Stockton. And, by this time, also, thanks to Sarah Brunt—a spinster of forty years—big and bony—who was to be Laura's housekeeper when the new place at El Gato Creek was in a fit state of habitation—Eagle Tail Rancho presented an appearance of cleanliness and comfort never before seen.

All was ready, therefore, in time; and on the fourth day after receiving Laura's letter, I rose before dawn, and groomed all the horses thoroughly, to their immense astonishment. Then I spent an hour in cleaning my best pair of plated spurs, and my new ivory-handled revolver. By ten all preparations were complete. I had donned my grey buckskin suit, and Comanche held his head high with the pride of bearing a brand-new, fifty-dollar Californian saddle. Jack stood by as I prepared to mount, and composedly lit his matutinal pipe.

"Adios, my boy. Mind the old horse don't buck you off. You shouldn't have given him that extra feed of corn last night. Don't forget to order a few hundred rounds of rifle cartridges. If your new friend, Mike Alison, pays us a visit, we shall want all we can get."

I laughed and rode away; but Jack was more in earnest than he appeared to be. He had never been really comfortable in his mind since my acquaintance with Mike began.

"Of all the foolish things you ever did, Harry," he said emphatically, "shaking hands with that cuss was the worst. You never know what such a man as he mayn't do, or try to do."

This morning Jack's allusion to Mike made very little impression upon me indeed. My thoughts were dwelling on other things. After one brisk spurt I travelled gently. The coach could not arrive before two at the earliest; and I did not wish to be obliged to loaf about town for a couple of hours.

A Western pony has only two paces: when his rider is on particular business, such as hunting cattle or horses, he strikes out at the lope, or canter, quickening to a gallop when the animals are in view; at other times he ambles, but he never trots. The reason for this is, that Western men ride with long stirrups, and never rise from the saddle by so much as an inch, no matter what their horses are about.

My journey this day was at the "pace." I made my way leisurely northward, along the apology for a road, which only deserved its name in this dry weather, being nothing more than two narrow tracks where the grass had been worn away by the passage of heavy waggons. I glanced at old familiar landmarks as I passed them with a quiet smile. It was the last time I should pass them alone. I reached the little wooden bridge which spanned the Chicareeka, the same river which, a few miles further down, curved to the south and met the Eagle Tail Mesa. I examined this structure critically, noting for the first time that its supports seemed old and worm-eaten. I thought that I should not like to take Laura many times across the bridge before it had been strengthened. Then I passed on across a broad meadow covered with sage-brush, where the Jack rabbits bounded away on either side, not followed to-day by a pistol bullet. Next came a gentle rise of prairie, at the other side of which was a winding watercourse, crossed by a gravelly ford.

I turned aside here for a few minutes. A hundred yards away stood a square house, with a high-peaked shingle roof, and walls of dark-red colour: a four-roomed house of one storey, and newly built, the window-panes shining with fresh white paint, and a Mexican at this very moment putting the last coat of varnish on the front door. The man smiled when he saw me, and raised his hat. It was my own little homestead, very nearly ready for Laura.

The furniture was still in its packing-cases as it had arrived from the East. I had promised Laura that I would touch nothing inside until she was there to see

and approve. Outside, however, everything was done, and the bright October sun shone joyously upon the trim stable, two hundred yards away, surrounded by capacious sheep and horse corrals; on the strip of ploughed land nearer the creek, where we would plant the garden next year; and upon two long, deep pools below, the best bit of water El Gato Creek could boast. A wire fence enclosed the whole, and ensured immunity from stray cattle and horses; for I had paid for this homestead, in hard cash, the price of my first year's crop of wool.

After inspecting the latest arrangements and conversing awhile with Ilario Gallegos, the foreman builder, I turned back upon the road, and presently reached Stockton, a town thirty-five miles south-west of Trinidad, which was the last point reached by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé Railroad.

Stockton was a quiet and sleepy place at this time—the fall of 1879. A few months later it was stirred to its depths by the railroad, changed its name, and became a city; but as yet it consisted of no more than a dozen dwellings. One was a pretentious three-storied structure, combining the advantages of hotel, restaurant, post-office, and saloon. It was built partly of adobe and partly of wood, and was hideously ugly. Opposite, was Gillespie's Store, a long, low, log-house, where every article required by Western men, from a needle to a repeating rifle, could be procured at prices, called by the proprietor, reasonable. And, scattered among the turns and curves of the Chicareeka Creek—a tributary to the river—were a few ranches, homes of the earliest settlers in these parts.

Stockton had been a station as far back as 1860, and a well-known spot to pioneers for thirty years. It was called after its founder, Old Tom Stockton, the first white man who ever settled in Northern New Mexico.

I hitched Comanche to a convenient post before the hotel, made my way to the bar, and asked for letters. I did not expect any, but made the customary request on the chance, and was rewarded by finding a really long epistle from Laura, who had employed a spare hour on the way, before starting upon her long journey.

The place was empty when I arrived, but presently two men strolled in, one of whom shook hands with me heartily. This was Mr. Josiah Gillespie, owner of

the store opposite, and a very good friend of ours.

He was a little man, clean shaved, except for a heavy military moustache; with a fallow face, that never changed either in colour or expression under any conceivable circumstances. His eyes were brown and very bright, the shrewd eyes of an American man of business; he was dressed neatly in black, with spotless linen.

The man who accompanied him was a marked contrast in dress and appearance. A very heavily built fellow, with the biggest chest I ever saw, and standing six feet six inches in his stockings. He had a face like a square block of brown rock; big black eyes under shaggy brows tinged with grey; and he was dressed in riding costume of brown leather overalls, flannel shirt, and a broad-brimmed grey felt hat. Round his waist was a broad belt, filled with cartridges and carrying a pair of Colt's revolvers. He held a whip in his right hand, and a short repeating Winchester carbine in his left, which he carelessly balanced between his finger and thumb. I knew who this must be at once, though we had not met before. It was Jake Blundell, the Sheriff—that is to say, police inspector—for the county.

"Well, Harry," said Mr. Gillespie, signing to the bar-keeper to bring cocktails for three, "so you're here to time! I suppose your folk are well on their way now past Baton. Did you know that my daughter Nep was in Trinidad?"

"I heard something of it, sir. Jack told me she was going."

Mr. Gillespie's eyes twinkled.

"Jack? Of course he did. Knew of it before I did, I believe. Is he there?"

I shook my head and smiled.

"He has too much to do this time."

I now raised my glass, and was about to taste its contents, when I heard a whispered oath from the Sheriff and a soft whistle from Mr. Gillespie, which made me put it quickly down. The very person we had been speaking of and imagined to be thirty miles away, was before us—Neptuna Gillespie. I can see the girl now, as she ran up the steps in her picturesque riding dress, with its embroidered buckakin bodice, and light grey habit. She wore a soft felt hat, trimmed with a gleaming rattlesnake skin, below which her dark hair had escaped from the snood which bound it, and fell over her shoulders in glorious confusion. Her face was oval like

her father's, her complexion dark brunette, and her eyes large and full. They were keen, courageous eyes, and had looked man-kind in the face without a thought of self-consciousness all her life. Her nose was small, slightly retroussé; the mouth a very firm one, the lips just now tightly pressed together. In figure Nep was slight and delicate, but lithe and well-proportioned as a young leopard; every movement full of a free, careless grace, which only true life in the country could have given her—the wild, free life of the Western plains. This was not a moment, however, in which to make a study of her personal appearance. Before we had time to ask a question, or express surprise, she had passed by her father and myself, and laid her hand upon Jake Blundell's arm.

"Oh, I am so glad to have found you, Mr. Blundell!" she said in a breathless tone—and now we noticed that she had been riding hard, the very brim of her hat being covered with dust. "I feared that you had left town. A terrible thing will happen, unless you can interfere at once." She paused a moment for breath.

"What is it?" said the Sheriff briefly, in a business-like tone.

"First, I must tell you that the morning stage broke down, before it had gone more than a mile out of Trinidad. You may have heard—" here she seemed to catch sight of me for the first time, and she stopped a minute; breaking out then in a choking voice:

"Oh, I am so sorry for you, Harry; oh, I am so sorry—so very sorry—but there is not time to tell my news gently. Every minute is precious."

She turned again to the Sheriff; and I stood close behind, and listened to her story silently, with set teeth and whitening lips.

"When the coach broke down—a wheel had come off, I think—the driver got on one of the mules and rode back to town for help. While he was away a buggy with two men in it drove past the wreck, and, pulling up, offered, for a small sum, to take two of the passengers as far as Stockton, if any were anxious to reach the place without delay. The offer was taken by an old gentleman and a young lady. When the stage driver came back, and found what had happened, he was nearly wild, for he knew these men—oh, Harry, keep cool!—they were those two devils and desperadoes, Pete Worrall and Kit Blossie."

Nep stopped again; for Jake upon

hearing these names forgot her presence, and growled out a heavy oath, bringing his fist down upon the counter with a mighty bang. He made no other remark, however, and the girl continued :

"Happily, John Foster, the driver, is a man of presence of mind. He got on another mule at once, and galloped back to town with the news. I heard it first, for the friend I was staying with keeps the hotel where the passengers slept last night, and John and I together tried all we knew to raise a posse to follow these villains. But would you believe it! We could not get a man to go. Oh!" exclaimed the girl, stamping her foot, tears of rage in her eyes, "what cowards men are who live in towns! There were twenty young fellows loafing about the street, but not one would stir, though I drew my revolver, and offered to lead the way. No! they said that the buggy could not be caught up now before it reached Menke's saloon, and that a bloodthirsty crowd would be there, and so on, and so on. Not a man would risk his precious skin for the sake of friendless foreigners, and one of them the most beautiful girl I ever saw. I was at my wit's end. Then I remembered that Menke's was only a few miles from Stockton, and knowing I should find some men here, I saddled my pony, and galloped all the way. And now, Mr. Blundell, how long will it take you to be off—yes—you and Harry!"

She paused, her bright eyes fixed trustingly upon his face, and her hand still upon his arm. But he shook his head and could not meet her look. Then he groaned, and swore softly to himself. At last, he said in a husky voice :

"God help us all, Miss Nep, I kin do nothing—nothing! There's not a dozen men in this place fit to go. Horne's boys were here yesterday, but they started at sun-up for Cimmarron. Some more may come in during the day; but who knows! And meanwhile——"

"But is there no one—no one? Oh! Harry, what are you doing, you are not going alone!"

I have said that I listened to Nep's story in silence. It was true, for my throat was too parched, and my lips too rigid for any words. Nep gave no names, but she knew who the helpless foreigners were, and what they were to me, and I knew—we all knew—what manner of hands they had fallen into. Pete Worrall and Kit Blossie! Oh, merciful Heavens! Laura in

their hands. A vision of a wicked, smiling face flashed before me—the face of the devil Kit Blossie, the man I had knocked down. A devilish face! A face full of the wickedness in which the man rejoiced. I could not speak to any one. I could only remember that I knew the way to Menke's saloon; yes, yes, I knew the way; and Comanche was still fresh. I was half way to the door when Nep spoke to me. I turned at her words, for I wished to thank her, and said, with difficulty :

"God bless you for this. Yes, I am going. Good-bye."

I turned again to the door, but before I could reach it Jake Blundell had stepped quickly forward and gripped me by the shoulder.

"What are you after?" he said shortly.

"Are you gone quite cracked?"

I shook myself free without replying, and laid my hand upon my revolver. He would have spoken again, but Mr. Gillespie said quietly behind :

"Let him alone, Jake. He is mad, but we can't stop him. The girl Pete and Kit have taken was to have been his wife. Poor lad! If we had only a round dozen decent shots, I'd chance it with you myself."

So they let me go in peace. I went quickly to Comanche, and began tightening his girths. As I secured the last, I heard a sharp exclamation from Jake Blundell, who was standing at the top of the saloon steps.

"Good Lord, Josiah! d'you see that cuss crossing the creek, and riding into town? Why, if it ain't the black archfiend himself—the biggest devil of the lot—Mike Alison, on his buckskin."

I started at the words, and looked in the direction Jake was pointing. Loping towards us at an easy pace, was a man on what they call a buckskin horse—that is a horse, bright yellow, with a black mane. Jake was right. Sitting his horse, Leone, like a pillar of stone, but keenly watching every movement of the men upon the steps, Mike Alison rode up. He nodded and smiled to me; gravely returned a grim salute from the Sheriff; and raised his hat when he saw Nep. I looked at him in silence, wondering whether he knew what had happened, and as he noted the expression of my face, his smile vanished, and drawing rein beside me, he said abruptly :

"What's happened?"

The others had now joined us. But

Mike did not take the slightest notice of them. I cleared my throat to speak distinctly, though the huskiness would not go. "You've saved my life twice, and I have called you my friend. Do you know what Pete Worrall and Kit Blossie are about to-day?"

"I do not. I have been South a few days, and was to meet them at Menke's to-night."

A great weight left my heart. That man was speaking the truth.

I laid my hand upon his knee.

"Mike, help me again. You are the only man who can help me."

"Out with it, lad."

"I told you—have you forgotten?—that I was to be married. My girl, I told you, was coming out from England. Laura, her name is—Laura." The others must have thought me mad to hear me talking to Mike Alison, of all men in the world, of my love affairs. "I rode in to-day to meet her on the road. But the coach has broken down, and, Mike—Mike—she and her uncle were persuaded by Kit Blossie and Pete Worrall to get into their buggy. They are now at Menke's saloon. And there is not a man in the town to go except myself!"

"That'll do," he replied. The words came from between his teeth like the hiss of a rattlesnake.

"Sheriff!" He wheeled his horse round so suddenly that he brought it upon its haunches. "There is only one way of getting this business done. I must make Menke's at once. But I can't run the whole business alone. The other boys will turn on me this time; they're bound to. Can you bring up a posse to see the end of it?"

Jake Blundell's face, as he was asked this unexpected question, was a sight to see. But he answered heartily:

"You bet I will, Mike, if I can find any boys. But they're durned scarce!"

"That's not your fault. If you can, follow me with a crowd in an hour. If not—well—I must run the funeral alone. It won't be the first time."

He settled himself in the saddle. I had mounted while he was speaking to the Sheriff, and now did the same; but he turned upon me with a shake of the head.

"You must follow with the boys."

I shrugged my shoulders contemptuously.

"Talk sense, please!"

He gave me a keen glance, then laying his hand upon my wrist, and pressing his finger upon the pulse, said sharply:

"Look at me."

I did so, and he continued slowly:

"Now, Harry, just listen! The business before us, to be any good, must be done coolly. We shall be two among twenty. If you lose your head we're done. Now, can you go into Menke's saloon with me, and shake hands with these men, without knowing what may have happened? Can you stand, and talk quietly, while your heartstrings are being torn to pieces by suspense? Can you sit down to a game of cards with the boys, when you long to see 'em all lying dead? Can you keep quiet, and unconcerned in manner, speech, and bearing, doing what I do, and saying what I say, until I give the word? If so, if your nerves are strong enough, then come; but not otherwise. I say nothing of the risk; I know you're not afraid. Remember, it is for her."

While he spoke Mike kept his eyes fixed upon mine with a searching, eager expression. I returned his look steadily.

"I understand all you say. I will go with you. I will be as cool as you yourself, Mike."

"Right! But—ah, there's another thing! Have you practised any with your six-shooter since I saw you last?"

"I can shoot a prairie dog at twenty yards."

"So! Can you kill it? Or does it slip back wounded into its hole?"

"No; I shoot it through the head, and pick up the body."

"Then you'll do. Vamos!"

CHAPTER IV.

MENKE'S.

AT the moment when Nep Gillespie startled us all by her sudden appearance, Mr. Menke, a few miles away, was leaning lazily against the doorpost of his saloon, slowly whittling away a piece of deal with a long jack-knife.

He was a German of mild aspect, with a flat, expressionless face, light hair, and eyes of a dull, fishy blue. A flabby man, who gave one the impression, that lounging in the sun, and drinking a great deal of beer, were the principal occupations of his life. He seldom spoke, and then said little worth hearing; and strangers put him down as a stupid Dutchman, with as much intellectual ability as one of his own whisky barrels.

But a cunning brain was lodged in

Hermann Menke's thick head, above his lack-lustre eyes. Heaven only knows what the previous life of this man had been. Perhaps he had once been a simple German peasant in a quiet village, going to church on Sunday morning, and to dancing on Sunday evening. But no pen could describe the scenes he must have witnessed—the orgies, the gambling, drinking, fighting, murdering, and devilry—during the ten years he had kept his drinking-shop—a saloon frequented by all the lawless desperadoes of the country round—at Boar Cañon, on the western side of the Chicareeka Mountain.

He was a man without any friends, a solitary man with no wife, or children, who lived in this saloon and dispensed the drinks, and the cards, and dodged the shots when the revolvers came out. But he was not, himself, regarded as an outlaw; quite the contrary; he visited everybody; only six days, in fact, before the stage broke down, he was peeling his bit of board on the steps of Gillespie's store, discussing in his slow way with the master the news of the country, and the politics of the State. There were many reasons for the wide acquaintance enjoyed by Menke among the ranche folk of the neighbourhood. We will mention three. He had the largest command of ready money of any man about, and never refused any one a loan on good security. No crime had ever been brought directly home to him, though his place was known to be little better than a den of thieves; and he had a skin tougher than raw-hide for taunt, snub, or sarcasm; no man was able to boast that he had ever disturbed Menke's equanimity.

But his true resting-place, where he loved to dwell, was his old, weather-beaten saloon. Here, all the year round, came visitors of grim aspect, and uncertain occupation, who sometimes brought acquaintances from the East to drink and play. These Eastern folk, it was said, were seldom heard of again by their friends at home, and no man knew exactly what became of them. That, of course, had nothing to do with Menke. When questioned on the subject, he said that he supplied liquor, which he warranted to be genuine; and that he provided good beds. If his customers would fall out over their cards, and settle their quarrel with knife and pistol, it was regrettable, but not his business; and, as for the dead bodies after a fight, no one could say that he did not give good

burial to all, with a pile of stones on top to baulk the coyotes. There were the piles of stones, in fact, outside his saloon for all the world to see. That his saloon had a bad name, he did not deny; but it had been established ten years; nobody had ever brought any charge against him; and he was well acquainted with Jake Blundell, the County Sheriff. It was perfectly true that Mike Alison, Pete Worrall, and their friends were good customers of his; they came as they pleased; they paid for their drinks; as for their characters, they might be all that the world said; he asked no questions; he did not know their affairs, had nothing to do with him. That was all Hermann Menke had to say, and it had been quite enough for Frontier folk up to this twenty-first day of October, 1879, the day on which the stage broke down. For nearly half-an-hour Menke lounged at his open door, with his dog dozing at his feet, and such grasshoppers as the early frosts had spared chirping peacefully around him. Inside the saloon were twenty men, the majority sitting in various attitudes of listless vacancy, as if waiting for something to happen; a few languidly playing poker, for five cent points. After a while, a man strolled out and looked at the prospect.

"They're late to-day, Hermann," he observed in an impatient, irritable tone.

"Ah, that is so. P'raps the game is heavy to carry this time. Eh! It is possible—very possible. No!"

"We-ll," remarked the other with a peculiarly round full-flavoured oath, aimed, apparently, at creation in general. "You ought to know, if any one. And, if it is so, why I hope it'll come quick. That cursed Mike is to be back to-night, and if there's anything spicy on when he turns up, he's dead sure to spoil the fun."

"Ya-yah!" said Menke, in sympathetic tones. "Mike is hard on you boys—I will say dat, very! Yet—he can shoot, lad! shoot like the black Nick. His bullet always reaches the spot, the soft, tender spot, and none come near him, not at all—at all."

The speaker chuckled grimly.

His companion replied with another oath more emphatic than the first.

"Shoot! Yes. And so almighty free with it. He'll as soon plug a friend as foe—if not sooner. Look how he put a hole through Townshend—thick as they were the day before. And all for laying hold of a little ranche girl, who'd mistaken the saloon for an hotel, and was fair game.

But, there! It was a woman. And when you've said that, you've said everything as far as Mike is concerned. Let there be a girl in the case, and whew! I'd sooner face a mountain lion in a cage with a broken pocket-knife in my hand, than Mike Alison. I don't mind a man bein' a bit free with the shootin' iron when he's drunk. But that cuss never drinks. He never laughs; he scarcely ever swears. Ugh, he gives me the shivers! Hello! there's the buggy, at last. And, look! Blamed if that aint a petticoat. A gurl, by the Lord, a gurl! Hi, boys! Here's fun, come out of that, everyone, and look here!"

Trotting briskly down the long hill, at the bottom of which Menke's saloon nestled picturesquely among the rocks and cedar trees, was a carriage containing four people. Out turned all the men, forming an eager, expectant group round the door, and giving vent to a chorus of whispered exclamations, as they saw the flutter of a white dress in the back seat of the buggy.

The vehicle approached quickly, and the faces of its occupants were soon distinctly visible. The men now became silent, their eyes opened to their fullest width, and a deep, involuntary sigh of admiration and pleasure escaped them.

The Western cowboy of the lower class has the most limited acquaintance with women that it is possible to imagine. I have been told in all seriousness more than once by one, "that he had not spoken to a woman for five years," and I believe the statement was almost strictly true. Judge then of the feelings of these men, as they stared, for the first time in their lives, at the fair face of an English girl.

A fair face, with delicate, regular features; large blue eyes of the intent earnest kind; a complexion so pure and fresh that it was not necessary to hear her speak to guess her nationality. Above the white forehead were shining bands of golden hair, bound neatly back, though one or two had escaped from bondage to-day, and waved in the wind rebelliously.

Laura was dressed simply in white, with a blue ribbon at her throat, and a plain straw hat. She wore no ornaments, except the brooch which secured the ribbon, and therefore looked exactly what she was, a refined, sweet English lady.

The buggy stopped, and Kit Blossie, the driver, swung himself down, and opened the carriage door.

"But this is not Stockton!" said the other passenger, a stout gentleman with

white whiskers, dressed in shooting costume, and looking intensely British.

"You can go no further," answered Pete Worral, who was sitting opposite to him. "We must trouble you to get out for a while. Come. It aint no good foolin' round, old man, and gettin' hot. Out with ye. Boys, just lend a hand——"

But Pete did not finish his sentence. He was of a hasty disposition, and, instead of giving his passengers time to realize their position by degrees, laid hold of Mr. Temple roughly by the shoulder. He had much mistaken his man. White hair does not always mean want of muscle. Imagining the fellow to be drunk—for Pete had applied himself more than once to a brandy flask on the way—Mr. Temple grappled with him, and grasping his throat with both hands, pushed him backwards with such goodwill, that he lost his balance, and ignominiously turned a somersault over the splash-board of the buggy, landing him abruptly on his head.

This turning of the tables amused the crowd mightily, and when Pete rose from the ground with many oaths, and passed his hand round for his pistol, there was a hearty laugh, accompanied with a warning cry:

"Hold up, now! The old man was right. Keep your fingers away from there!"

And, head of the gang though he was, Pete was obliged to submit with a bad grace, and leave Kit Blossie to escort the passengers, with marked politeness, to a small room behind the main apartment of the saloon.

Mr. Temple had now recovered from the effect of the scrimmage, and though much puzzled at the whole proceeding, was somewhat reassured by the manner of the younger man. "A good-looking fellow at one time, I should think," he said afterwards. "But his beauty was interfered with by a broken nose, and a pair of eyes that had not long ago been very black—a kick from a horse, he told us."

When the old gentleman made a second attempt to discover the precise position of affairs, Kit Blossie smiled and looked at Laura.

"Western hospitality, sir. You see, it ain't often that the boys have the pleasure of seeing a lady in these parts, and we thought we'd give 'em a treat. Oh, we'll move on to Stockton presently."

He spoke slowly, and to the last word never removed his eyes from the girl's face.

Mr. Temple's heart ached. Oh, for a good horsewhip, and youth and strength and time wherewith to lay it on!

"But I have paid my niece's fare and my own for a direct journey to Stockton. Tell me, man, what do you mean?"

Kit Blossie sighed gently and shook his head, then softly chuckled as he glanced at the old gentleman's red, excited face.

"Well, you see, my friend," he said, slowly—and again his eyes returned to contemplation of Laura—"it's this way——"

"Yes," interrupted Mr. Temple, bitterly. "You need not go on. I see that we are in the hands of scoundrels. I suppose you are aware that I am not without friends here?"

"Here?" said Kit, raising his eyebrows. "That's curious! None of the boys seemed to recognise you."

"I mean in this country," roared the old gentleman, stamping his foot; "about Stockton and the neighbourhood!"

"Oh, yes—yes—Stockton," said Kit, reflectively. "Do you know how far we are off Stockton?"

Mr. Temple was silent. The country was utterly strange to him. They might be fifty miles away.

"At any rate, sir, I am an English citizen. If anything should happen to me or my niece, you would pay dearly for it—dearly for it."

The young man opened his eyes wide at this threat, and then threw back his head and laughed aloud.

"That's so good a joke that I must just clear off and tell the boys. A Britisher to be held sacred? Oh, Lord, how rich! Well, my noble Englishman, our boss, Mike Alison—who'll be here, I dessey, before you leave—came from the little island a few years ago. Put your case before him if you think by his face that he'll be scared by the British Government. Now I'm goin'. You'll be comfortable, I hope—and the young lady. We shall meet again before long, and see more of one another."

He went slowly out and closed the door, locking it after him with a distinct and deliberate click.

Mr. Temple hastily glanced round the room. There was a small window a foot square, with a stout iron bar across it, and another door, just ajar, which opened into the saloon itself. The sound of loud, coarse voices came from this side, and Mr. Temple's first action was to close the door smartly. Even then, there being only

a thin wooden partition between the rooms, the buzz of conversation was still faintly audible; and presently, when two men strolled up the room and seated themselves close by the partition, the prisoners could hear what they were saying, and recognised the tones of the men by whom they had been entrapped. For some little time, however, Mr. Temple and Laura were too much occupied with each other to pay attention to anything else.

When Kit finally took himself off, the old gentleman silently drew the girl towards him and kissed her. She looked at him wistfully, with a half-puzzled expression.

"Uncle Geoffrey, do tell me exactly what you think these men are going to do with us?"

He put his arms round her, clasped her close, and shook his head.

"My dear, my dear, how can I! Yet I must tell you—I must tell you, that—I—fear the worst!"

"And don't you think there is any chance of Harry? But no, there is none," she added hastily. "Don't speak."

She put her finger on his lip, and then hid her face in his breast for awhile. Presently, she raised her head, and resolutely brushed away the tears.

"It is very weak of me to give way like this. But it is so sudden, so unexpected, so terrible; and I cannot help thinking of our poor boy waiting for us, and wondering what can have happened. I was not thinking of myself, or of you, dear. Perhaps I had better do so, and then I shall not cry."

He laid his cheek upon hers.

"My brave girl." She felt the hot tears dropping one by one.

They did not speak again for some time. Now and then Laura shuddered slightly, and Mr. Temple's face grew so pale and wan, that his friends would have scarcely recognised him.

Meanwhile, the two voices in the saloon rose and fell, and, by-and-by, the prisoners began to listen to what was said.

The men seemed to be heated with drink, one was laughing, the other in bad humour.

"Curse the luck," they heard him say, it was Pete Worral. "I haven't been so much out of it for months. Your deal, Kit."

"Right, mio amigo, so—so! Right bower here; my trick again. Only twenty more points to make, and then the stakes are mine, my boy. Plucky old codger,

her uncle! Never saw you turn a neater skyer. Well, don't get mad. Remember ——" and here he whispered something that Laura could not hear, but which Mr. Temple did: and he clenched his fists and groaned, longing, perhaps, for a revolver, which he would not have known how to use. He kept still, however, listening for more. Kit was laughing again.

"Nothing like cards, with a decent glass beside one, to decide important business. I don't want the money, blast it! You and the boys can have that, but—well, play, man, play, it's your turn. What's that? A king. There you are, then, mine again. Gosh! Time's drawing on. I must have a peep at her in a minute. But we'll settle this first. If my luck sticks to me, this round will be the last. Only five points to win."

He fell silent now, and as his harsh voice ceased, Laura raised her head once more. Mr. Temple's eyes were bent on the ground. He took something from his waistcoat-pocket, and held it concealed in his right hand. Then he stole a glance at his companion, and seeing that her eyes were bright and steady, and her head erect, lifted his eyes, and gazed steadfastly into her face. The colour fled from the girl's cheeks, as she met his look; but her eyes grew brighter and never swerved from his.

"Laura, do you—do you know what they mean?"

She made no reply.

Slowly, very slowly, he opened his right hand, watching her furtively the while. In the palm of this hand, lay a pocket-knife; the blade of it seemed to be no more than two inches long.

The girl looked at it a moment, then took it from him and opened the big blade.

"It will do," she whispered, handing it back. "You will drive it straight—straight to my heart—will you not?"

Mr. Temple nodded. He was past all speech. Laura fell upon her knees, and covered her face; but her uncle could not pray. He bent over the girl with set teeth, firmly grasping the open knife in his hand. He was old; he had lived a quiet life in law-abiding England; and now, in his age, he had come abroad—to kill the child!

Think of it! Think of it!

And while the girl waited, on her knees, and the old man watched for the time to deal the blow, in the saloon outside Hermann Menke stood at the bar and

passed the whisky bottle—it was nothing to him—and the two men played their game, and the others looked on. Five minutes more and the game would be finished. Well; it was nothing to Hermann Menke.

CHAPTER V.

THE GAME AND THE STAKES.

A RACE for life and death. We had ten miles of rough country to cover, and we did it in less than an hour.

The horses seemed to understand the urgency of the case—what does not an intelligent horse understand?—and neither rough nor smooth, up hill nor down hill, made any difference to their pace. A creek was reached with steep crumbling banks; a spot which, under ordinary circumstances, I should have ridden a mile out of my way to avoid. Now, I led the way, and Comanche was at the bottom with one leap, and up the opposite side with another, more like a young prong-horned antelope, than an elderly cow-pony. On, through dark cañons, and over rolling prairie; past a rancho, where the stockman paused in his work and laid his thumb on his revolver at sight of Black Mike; removing it, as we dashed by, and rubbing his nose reflectively, wondering what devilment the cuss had in view to-day, and whether the Sheriff was after him.

At last Mike raised his hand and pointed. Half-a-mile ahead a wreath of blue smoke was curling slowly up from a grey chimney, among a grove of trees.

"Menke's," he said laconically. "Not a sign now, Harry, nor a look, until I give the word."

I nodded, but my pulse beat no faster; my face did not change in expression. They told me afterwards that it was as colourless as a dead man's. I believe that at this moment the despair which possessed me had affected my mind. Happily, the conduct of the business which followed was in the hands of one whose nerves were at their steadiest, whose brain was at its clearest, in a crisis such as this.

Mike Alison was in his element. Not a shade of anxiety was visible in his face, as we drew up before the main door of the saloon, where Menke had been lounging previous to the arrival of the buggy, and Mike greeted two men on the steps in the cheeriest tone I had ever heard him use.

"Well, boys, and how's things? Worrall and Blossie here?"

"Yes, boss. Inside, playing."

"So! And what are they playing for?"

The men grinned, and jerked their thumbs in the direction of the small room behind the saloon.

"Big stakes."

Mike laughed.

"Ha, ha! Cunning dogs! I heard there was something in the wind. I'm earlier than I intended; come in for the fun after all. Never mind, let 'em play; let 'em play—it'll do them good. No, thanks, we won't look at the stakes yet. Plenty of time for that; and Worrall might not like it. He's boss here. We'll drop in to see him and his partner first. By-the-by, you remember this man!" pointing to me. "I picked him up on the way here and asked him to come along for a bit of a game. Get down, Harry. Now, boys, let's have a drink all round. I'm as dry as a mosquito in June."

Thus, speaking in a tone loud enough for all the world to hear, Mike dismounted leisurely, stepped across the porch, and carelessly tilting his sombrero back with his right hand, quietly entered Menke's saloon.

He was greeted with a silence that could be felt. It was the shadow of the hawk over the chicken-yard.

"Come, stand to, stand to, those who'll have anything," said Mike in a cheery tone, his eyes slipping rapidly from face to face, until he caught sight of two men in the further corner of the room.

"Mr. Menke"—shaking hands with the saloon-keeper—"how are you? Business is brisk to-day. So, I hear you've Eastern visitors again. Well, gentlemen, and what'll you have? All right; five cocktails, two sherry cobbblers, three lagers, and one egg-nog. Serve 'em out, Mr. Menke, and put it down to me. Thanks; and now, Joe, tell me what you've all been up to?"

Mike was now stirring a glass of brandy, and smiling amiably, his back against the counter and his legs comfortably crossed. The ominous silence and looks askance, which had heralded his first appearance, now subsided. The players went on with their games, the drinkers sipped their whisky, and only two men near the wooden partition at the further end of the room still kept their eyes on the new comers. These were Worrall and Blossie. They did not come forward to greet us.

"And so," said Mike, after hearing Joe's

account of the arrival, and critically examining the contents of his glass—a sip between each word—"this raid is entirely the funeral of Pete and Kit!"

"Yes; but we're to have a share of what's on the old man."

"Of course," chimed in Mike, gravely.

"Well, Harry, I guess, if you've had enough whisky, we'll move up a little, and hunt for a vacant table and two partners. I feel rather like beginning that game I promised you. The bill, Menke."

As Mike spoke he stretched himself and yawned. Then he paid his money leisurely, pocketed the change, and with slow and careless step made his way towards the upper end of the saloon.

I followed closely. We were in a large oblong room, the door at which we entered opening at one end close to the bar. There was a stove here, lighted even in this warm weather, and six men sitting round it smoking, with their feet on the top, and their chairs tilted back as far as they might safely go. Beyond the stove, which we now left behind us, and stretching to the wooden partition near which Worrall and Blossie had seated themselves, were two lines of small tables for cards, each accommodating four players.

We went about half-way up the room, and then Mike stopped to lay his hand with a short greeting on the shoulder of a card player. At the touch and sound the man rose quickly and motioned towards the table.

"Will you come in, Mike? Me and Bill are only fooling for a few cents."

"No, Josh. You're in the middle of a round. There's no hurry. We'll watch you a bit. Plenty of time for our game. Eh, Harry?"

He turned to me with a smile; but at the same moment trod sharply on my toe.

I had now to put the greatest pressure upon myself to preserve an easy bearing, and not excite attention from those around. The allusion to Laura by the men, the knowledge that we were close by her, had completely broken down the benumbed, hopeless despair. It was well that ordinary Western life gives a man a hard, grim face; it was well that Mike had warned me of the danger before I started. Had it not been for this, I must have aroused the deepest suspicion.

At last I could bear the suspense no longer, and, softly pressing Mike's foot, said as carelessly as I could, though the hollowness of my voice startled me:

"When is the fun to begin? I came here expecting a game. It's a long time coming."

Mike turned quickly with a significant nod.

"All right, lad, in a minute. You're too impatient. Thanks, Bill; well, I guess we'll come. Mr. Menke, a new deck of cards here."

We were standing close together. Mike now leant towards me, and slapping his pocket as if his words had reference to money, whispered:

"I've had to keep quiet so long to get 'em off the scent. They suspected our game when we first turned up. Now the course is clear. There's only one thing to say: keep yourself still, and don't look at Kit until I say 'Short Cut.' Then pull as quick as you please, back up against me, and cover the boys at the bar. The moment a six-shooter comes out begin to fire, and keep on till I tell you to stop. Quiet, now; here's Kit with the news. Steady, boy!"

With a step not quite so sure as it had been an hour ago, Kit Blossie came towards us, between the rows of card tables, and holding out his hand with a grin, shook both Mike's and my own, warmly.

"Very glad to see ye, by George!" he said hoarsely. "We were finishing a game, Pete and me, so I didn't come round before. Are you going to play? Well, you must excuse me." Here he smiled so broadly that he showed every tooth in his head.

"And what are you going to do, Kit?" said Mike, shuffling the cards Menke had handed to him, with an absent air.

"Do—Eh? Do? Oh, I've been playing Pete here, for high stakes, that's all, and I've beat him. And now I'm going to count the winnings."

Again, he held out his hand, with a drunken chuckle, but somehow I contrived not to see it, so with a grunt he went slowly back again, towards the door in the wooden partition.

As he left us Mike deposited his cards quickly on the table, and glanced keenly after the retreating figure. Kit had stopped half-way, and was now leaning over the back of a chair talking to someone.

"Is this a full pack, Hermann?"

There was a general laugh. As if anyone would think of giving Mike Alison a short one.

"Well, I must count it and see. Come, gather up your stakes, boys, and don't stare at us; we're ready."

The man called Bill now moved to my side; and with a quick, decided motion, Mike began to count.

"Twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two," again I felt a pressure on my foot, and saw him put down two cards together; "twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five." Kit had now concluded his conversation, and resumed his progress towards the door. The cards were passing swiftly through Mike's hands, but he was not looking at them. "Forty-six, forty-seven, forty-eight." Kit was close to the partition. Pete Worrall, half risen from his chair, was peering intently after him.

"Short Cut."

It was the word at last.

With a swift movement, Mike stepped forward, facing the wooden partition, holding in each hand a cocked revolver. Crack, the double report rang out in the low-roofed saloon, with a smothered roar. Through the stifling smoke, I dimly saw the tall figure near the door sway to and fro like a tower undermined with gunpowder, totter, and fall forwards with the heavy unmistakable thud of a dead man. At the same moment came a crash of breaking wood. The man at the table close by had sprung up with a sharp, convulsive cry, and, stumbling backwards over his chair, smashed it to fragments.

As Mike gave the word, I drew my revolver, and standing against him, back to back, passed the muzzle slowly round the faces in front of me. At the same time, clearly audible above the yell of the startled crowd, came his warning.

"Steady! steady! The first who puts his finger on his pistol will go to Kingdom Come before he can wink. Steady, I say, steady!"

For a few seconds no one moved. There were only five men in front of me at this time, and these the least concerned in the matter. The rest, furious though they were, and bound by the only code of honour they possessed to avenge this outrage at all costs, stood quelled by the man who feared nothing; who never missed his aim; and who, for five years past, had never failed for good or ill to keep his word.

But this could not last. In a few minutes we must have been fighting for our lives, the odds against us—ten to one. At this moment, however, there was a loud shout from Menke, who was watching the scene from behind a whisky barrel. The door near the bar flew open, and Jake

Blundell, followed by thirty cowboys with their rifles at the ready, and every finger on the trigger, came hastily in.

Mike turned his head at the welcome sound, and as the desperadoes became as quiet as mice and raised their hands in token of submission, he exclaimed promptly:

"Hold up, Jake."

Which just came in time to save the lives of Menke and the men I was covering.

In trooped the new comers, and Mike Alison and the Sheriff shook hands, for the first time in their lives. Nep Gillespie was with the rescue party, and now came up to me, pale and anxious.

"Where are they?"

I pointed to the partition.

"I am just going to see."

"You wait," she said quickly, holding my arm. Then, raising her voice, addressed the Sheriff, "Mr. Blundell, will you please take care that no one leaves this place until I have been into the room behind, alone? The passengers from the stage are there."

Jake nodded, and looked down upon her approvingly.

"Boys," he roared, "up with the rifles again, and, if there's a movement anywhere, let go."

"If the girl's been so much as spoken rough," he continued, glaring upon the gang, "not one living soul who saw them taken in shall leave this place alive—not one living soul. Steady with yer repeaters, boys. We're ready, Miss Nep. You go forward now. If the news is bad, say 'Yes.' If all's safe, 'No.' Then we shall know what to do. Keep still, Thornton, it'll be all over in a minute."

Then, amid a silence so profound that the champing of the horses outside could be plainly heard, Nep opened the door, gave a little cry, and passed quickly in. Paying no attention to Jake, I followed her, and, standing over Kit Blossie's dead body, waited breathlessly. Now the door-handle was turned again, and Nep reappeared; she stepped aside for me to pass in, and then said quietly, "NO."

CHAPTER VI.

A GENTLEMAN BORN.

Two days afterwards. We were at Eagle Tail Rancho. It was ten o'clock. The girls had gone to bed. Mr. Temple sat in the easy-chair, and Jack, the Sheriff, myself, and Kuk Troy, whose long legs lay across

half one side of the room, completed the circle.

Suddenly, and without any warning, the Sheriff arose solemnly and delivered his soul of the following oration.

"Friends," he began slowly, "I'm goin' to say a thing for which there maybe folk—" and here he looked at me—"who'll cry, 'blame him fur an interferin', backbitin', spiteful meddler.' Wa'al, now, I've reckoned to chance this. For, sez I, where's the good of bein' Sheriff of this county, if I don't do my duty all round? Private as well as public."

"Now, what I've on my mind is this: a man here got acquainted in a peccoliar kind o' way with Mike Alison. This Mike Alison, whom we all know—and we needn't go out of our way to call him names—quite contrary to his own nature, does more'n one real handsome thing by this man, and he, bein' impetuous inclined, and not seein' or knowin' the other side of the cuss, sez, 'Be my friend.' 'I will,' sez Mike. And, boys, I aint the one to say as he didn't mean it honest and square—when he said it. But a bit later a young lady comes out—the purtiest morsel, I'm willing to swear, as was ever seen on this airth, or any other. Under circumstances we all know about, Mike Alison sees this young lady, and from the moment he sets eyes on her—" here the Sheriff raised his voice, and emphasised each word—"he never ceases lookin' at her ontill she's out o'sight. Well, you say, why shouldn't he look at such a girl? Many an honest man would stare his eyes out and no blame to him. Ay, that's so; but he wouldn't look as Mike Alison looked. No, nor he wouldn't bow as he bowed, nor he wouldn't say 'I won't forget' as he said it, unless—he meant mischief. Boys, Harry Thornton has asked Mike Alison to visit here, and I kin see by his face that nothing I can say will persuade him to countermand the invite. But dew you just remember that I am speaking with twenty years' experience of such as him and I say—beware of him! Keep your eyes well greased when he's around. Don't let her out of your sight one moment, as you value your souls. I tell you, boys, so help me Heaven! if that man comes prowlin' around here with a free hand, there will be trouble."

Jake sat down and wiped his brow. The close proximity in which he had stood to the fire, and his own excitement, made him perspire as if it were the middle of summer. No one spoke for a minute. I

was too angry to trust myself, and the others too much astonished. At last Jack said, in his dryest tone :

"So you have invited Mike Alison to the ranche, Harry! You might have waited until you had a place of your own."

"I shall be happy to receive him in the stable, if you please," I replied hotly, "if you won't have him here. Laura and I will do our best to make him comfortable."

My partner shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course he's free to come, as you've asked him, and we must hope for the best. I shall be glad, though, for your own sake, when you become a little wiser."

"Thanks. I hope it will be some time before it becomes my practice to turn a cold shoulder upon a man who has done more for me, out of pure disinterestedness, than anyone I have ever met. Don't forget, Jack, that he saved my life twice : once from the Indians, and once from the horse thieves. And now he has saved Laura."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Temple, "we must not forget that."

"I don't want you to forget it, Harry. You are under the greatest obligations to this man, and if you ever get a chance you must repay him. But as for asking him to this ranche—" Jack shrugged his shoulders ; "by-the-by," he went on, "you told me once how he started at Laura's name. When was that?"

"The night the Indians burnt my camp."

"Yes. How much disinterested kindness had he shown before that?"

"I don't see what that has to do with it."

"It depends!" was the dry reply.

I was silent. There was a nasty flavour in Jack's words. We had never got at the bottom of that start. Then I thought of those true grey eyes, and I turned abruptly to the Sheriff.

"I don't want to impute any bad motives to you, Jake Blundell, but I must say this : I think your suspicions are utterly unfounded. I do not care one straw about Mike Alison's history ; no doubt he has done things. But I believe in him. I believe he means well and honestly by us. I shall not either by word or look treat him otherwise than as a most true friend. But I will do this : I will repeat to Miss Temple what you have said, and so put her on her guard. If she believes your statements, I will act accordingly. At the same time I must beg you to distinctly

understand that I will not allow a word to be spoken against Mike Alison in my presence. Whatever he may have done to others, he has been a true friend to me."

I rose now quickly, and went into the next room to lay down sheepskins and blankets. Through the open door I could see that Kirk Troy had risen from his seat, and was peering at the Sheriff with a look of intent interest, and I heard Jake's muttered comment on my words.

"Foolish boy, foolish boy! I knew he'd take it in this way. S'elp me, gentlemen, I've no spite agin that man ; but I know what I'm sayin', and I say again, and yet again, there—will—be—trouble. We have not heard the last of Mike Alison."

We had not, indeed ; yet the last of him was very, very far from what Jake Blundell expected, as you shall see.

CHAPTER VII.

AT EAGLE TAIL RANCHE.

THE next morning Jake Blundell returned to town. He said nothing more to me about Mike ; but I overheard a remark to Jack when he was taking leave.

"Yes, you may be sure I'll keep my eyes and ears open, and watch him and his gang keeful enough. There's others on the job, also, nearer head-quarters than me."

Later in the day I saddled Comanche, and brought out a little baymare, Jack's wedding present to Laura, which for some time past I had ridden daily myself with a blanket round my knees, and was now able to pronounce perfectly safe. We were starting on our first expedition to the new ranche.

On the way I told Laura of what had passed on the preceding evening. Never, before or since, have I seen her quite so angry.

"How abominable to say such things! Mr. Alison look at me in an impertinent manner! Nothing of the kind. He was most polite. I don't care what he has done. I would trust myself with that man, Harry, alone, as readily as I would with Uncle Geoffrey."

"And for Jack, too, to mistrust him! as well mistrust Nep— But oh! Harry, my dear"—and here Laura smiled all over her face in such a way that I found it necessary to institute another interruption—"are they engaged?"

"You mean Nep and Jack? Certainly not."

"But they are so much together; and I am certain he cares for her, and that she knows it."

"I daresay; but does he know that she knows it? Remember—well, I won't say it again—we are in America, Western America. Jack and I have only known Nep for the past twelve months; previous to that she was at school in the East, spending her holidays at Stockton. So, they are friends. At the same time there's not a bachelor for twenty miles round who does not rave about her, and Jack has a dozen ardent rivals, if he has one. I hope you are right, I am sure, for she is really an exceedingly well educated girl, and a true lady at heart, though she does carry a revolver, and can ride a bucking horse."

"Yes, I am sure she is. And yet, I can't quite understand these American friendships. She rides with Jack, alone. Are her other friends granted similar privileges? And if they are not, why doesn't he say something? One reads of such things in books. I can't say I like it."

"Indeed!" I answered smiling. "I do, immensely. Nep and I have ridden together scores of times. Alas! those days are over now for me."

"Are they? It didn't look like it this morning when you were showing her your revolver, and cleaning hers."

And so we chatted gaily on, pursuing our journey leisurely. We were now within sight of El Gato Creek, and were just going to break into a lope, when we saw Mr. Gillespie approaching us on the road from town.

He was dressed as usual in neat black clothes; but he had now donned a pair of smart riding-boots, with remarkably high heels, and duly spurred; a full-size Colt's revolver was hanging from his waist, and he rode a wild-looking, raw-boned cow-pony. Altogether he was the most curious compound of civilised storekeeper and stockman ever seen.

He saluted us with gravity, though his brown eyes twinkled merrily.

"Wa-al, Miss Laura, you don't look so much the worse for yesterday. Wonderful revivin' power in New Mexican air, Harry! How's the old gentleman? Rather used up? Ay, he looked it, last night. He'll soon pull round, though. You Britishers are tough. What he went through would have killed most of the Eastern men I know."

"So, friends, I won't keep you. I see

you are worried with business. I am just tottin' down to have a look at my little girl, and to tell Jack that I've had an offer for the wool he left with me, which might suit him. By-the-by, I've some bad news for you. The American parson's got sick and has gone home for a spell. I doubt whether he'll taste Jack's champagne until the New Year."

Here was a terrible state of things.

"Why, what has happened to him?"

Mr. Gillespie gave his month a comical twist.

"Ah! that's hard telling—very! The official bulletin says 'severe indisposition and rheumatic affections in the limbs.' I should be inclined to have said, hankerings after thanksgiving-day, pumpkin-pies and whisky fixin's! It's a fact, however, that he's gone, and that there's no one to run your funeral—I beg pardon, marriage—until he comes back. P'raps he'll turn up before Christmas, if not, you'd better fetch him. Adios."

We rode on slowly in silence. Had I been alone, I should have used strong language concerning that parson. There was no help for it, though; and Laura reminded me that the preparations which had yet to be made were so many that two months would very soon pass, and our home be all the more complete and comfortable at the end of it. The worst point was the probable state of the weather. I solemnly swore, however, there and then, that if this parson should make any excuse by reason of the cold, I would follow Mr. Gillespie's advice and fetch him, if I had to carry a lasso along and tie him down.

Two months we had to wait before that parson would come back to his Western ministrations—two months. To Laura the time was spent in learning the manners and customs of her new home, in arranging the furniture at our ranche, in riding the pony I had broken in for her, and in going about the country with Nep, Jack, and myself.

Only one incident happened during this time.

This was the promised visit of Mike Alison.

It is curious what a fatality there is about some things in this world. The very first day that business called Jack and myself to town together, and the ranche was left in the charge of Kirk, Sarah Brunt, and the girls, when for three weeks previously we had never left them unpro-

pected for a single hour, Mike must needs take it into his head to pay that visit.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon that he came. Nep was lying back on the couch, reading a novel; Laura was amusing herself turning over some music, old and new, trying this and that on the piano; Sarah Brunt was busy about household work in the kitchen; and Kirk Troy was in the stable mending harness. He was the first to hear the sound of approaching hoofs, and, looking out, saw the well-known buckskin horse on the road from town, pacing steadily towards the ranche. Throwing down his work, he tore to the house. His half-crazed brain was nearly turned with terror; he had sucked in every word spoken by Jake Blundell. More than that, he remembered it all, and he believed that the most frightful things were about to happen right away. And yet, though long before Mike reached the place, Kirk had taken a loaded rifle from the rack, and drawn the dog-head back to the full, it was characteristic of his weakened brain that he never warned the girls of their danger, nor went out boldly to meet the supposed villain. Instead of this, he skulked behind the door between bedroom and kitchen, and, in answer to Mike's whistle, Sarah Brunt made her appearance alone.

At sight of Black Mike, even the stout heart of the spinster beat more quickly than usual, though she braced herself to meet the difficulty in a becoming spirit.

"Good day, ma'am!" said the newcomer, in mild accents. "Anyone at home?"

"Not a creetur, except me and Kirk Troy," was the prompt answer.

"Is that so?" and Mike smiled broadly, for at this moment, Laura struck up a spirited march, which could have been heard a mile. Sarah Brunt put her arms akimbo, and tossed her head.

"Oh, of course the girls is in; but I didn't count them, as I knew they'd nothing to do with you. Come round at sundown again, if you're passin'. Jack and Harry will be at home, then."

"Thanks," was the tranquil answer. "I've ridden twenty miles, and I don't feel like doing any more. I'll get down. Miss Temple and I have met before. Tell them I'm here, if you don't mind."

Miss Brunt drew herself up, at the same time glancing sideways at Kirk Troy, who stood at the inner door, with his cocked rifle.

"No, Mike Alison, for that's who you are, and I know you well. I will not tell them young girls that you're come. And I kin tell *yew* straight, I think you've got blasted impudence even to ask me. That I *dew*!"

Mike made no reply to this delicate hint. He was dismounting at the moment, and now turned his back upon the housekeeper, and led his horse to the hitching post at the corner of the house. Securing Leone there, Mike strolled back in a leisurely manner. Miss Brunt was still in the doorway, watching him with a defiant but anxious eye.

"And what do you want now?" she said shortly, as he came up.

"I wish to know," he said, "whether you are going to tell Miss Temple that I'm here; or whether I must announce myself?"

"Neither the one nor the other," was the emphatic rejoinder. "Kirk, cover him; and let fly if he makes the slightest move forward. Now, Mike Alison, no fooling. Just git!"

At these words Mike's face, which up to this moment had been wearing a quiet, amused smile, changed. This was somewhat more than a joke. His brows contracted and his teeth slowly closed upon his moustache, and though for several seconds he stood perfectly still, the intrepid spinster, to use her own expression, "felt shivers run up and down her back like water snakes."

"I am sorry to be unpolite to a lady," said he at last, stepping forward, and putting Miss Brunt aside with as much ease and gentleness as if she had been a baby, "but this kind of thing gets monotonous, after a while."

He came now face to face with Kirk. The idiot's rifle was at the shoulder, and for a fractional part of a second, Mike's fingers went in search of his revolver, and Kirk's life hung by a hair. But better feelings gained the day, and he only said sternly:

"Put that down. Don't try to frighten me. You know perfectly well that you could not hit me if you fired. Your hand is trembling."

The men looked at each other fixedly. Kirk had brought himself fully to the pitch of shooting anybody or anything, if they had to push past him and open the parlour door; but this man did not push. He simply glared at him with terrible shining eyes, and, under his look, Kirk felt himself losing all heart and power.

"Put that down," said Mike again now slowly approaching the idiot, step by step. Kirk sighed twice, wavered, cast an imploring look at Sarah Brunt, as if wishing she would take his place, and then slowly lowered the muzzle of his weapon, and stood still and helpless, to Sarah's intense disgust, while Mike walked steadily past him, and laid his hand on the lock of the parlour door.

An hour later Jack and I arrived from town. We were surprised to see Sarah running out to meet us, and spurred forward sharply.

"What's the matter?"

"The Devil," was the breathless reply. "He's here. Nothing short. It is Mike Alison himself. He has been alone in the settin'-room for I dunno know how long with Nep and Laura, and there's that blamed idiot cuss as foolish as he's high, a-squattin' on the door-step with a shot gun, and a sayin' he'll have Mike's blood when he comes out, yet without spunk enough to go in and take it there and then like a man and a Christian. And here am I, a worritin' myself to death, for fear that gun should go off in his great clumsy hands and hit the wrong person; and because I can't tell what's happenin' inside, and yet dursn't peep in and see. For goodness sake, hurry up, boys, or they'll be all murdered before ye get there."

We did as we were told promptly, and Jack's face was as white as the redness of his complexion would permit, by the time we swung off our horses and made for the parlour. There was Kirk, as Sarah had described, crouching on the step, hugging a shot-gun, with long and anxious countenance, an unpleasant glitter in his eyes. We walked past him quickly and opened the door. What Jack expected to see I know not; but I never saw a man look more foolish than he, as with a cocked revolver in his hand he stepped in, and saw the girls at the piano in the act of beginning a duet. Beside them, and placing the music-book in position, was Mike Alison.

"I have not heard this piece for ten years," he was saying, "and it was thought old-fashioned then, I remember; but I used to consider it one of the prettiest ever written. Such duets as this do not seem to be composed nowadays."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT DO YOU HERE!

THE Western man has many qualities peculiar to himself, but none so character-

istic as a power of keeping his countenance, and retaining self-possession, under the most trying circumstances. Thus, when Jack opened the parlour door with blood-thirsty intent, and found there a polite and sociable party engaged in the innocent occupation already mentioned; though he inwardly felt, as he confided to Nep afterwards, "as mean as a squashed snail;" yet, after one whispered exclamation, and a nonplussed glance, he dropped his revolver into its holster, as if it were out by the merest accident, and greeted the visitor in the pleasantest manner imaginable, as if his presence was no surprise at all.

"And how have you been amusing yourself this afternoon, Mike? I hope they made you welcome."

"We did our best," said Laura innocently, while Sarah put down the dish she was carrying with a prodigious bang, and hastily left the room.

"Mr. Alison has been refreshing his memory of home by looking at photographs of English people. I hope he did not find it very dull?"

There was a curious questioning tone in Laura's voice; and glancing at her I noticed that her eyes were bright and her cheeks a little flushed. Mike, also, turned his head away before he replied slowly with the same refined tone and accent I had heard once before.

"Yes, Miss Temple was kind enough to introduce me to all the members of her family in succession. It was very interesting. And it certainly did remind me of old times."

He spoke in carefully-measured tones, which brought back to me the evening at camp, when I had told him Laura's name. I stretched my hand over the back of her chair to a little table where the family album stood, and without speaking began to turn the pages carelessly, watching Mike out of the corner of my eyes. There was a photograph of myself when a boy, one of Laura's father and mother, and then a likeness of her elder sister, married to an old college tutor of mine. Laura now laid her hand upon the book and smiled:

"Mr. Alison was so anxious to know who this could be, that I formally accused him of knowing Adelaide. But he denied it. Did you not, Mr. Alison?"

He was looking at me fully, the lamp Sarah had just placed on the table shining brightly on his face. I noticed for the first time that in spite of bright keen eyes, and

a fierce mouth, the prevailing expression of his face was sadness, the sadness of a man in constant pain. But his voice was perfectly composed as he replied slowly:

"I do not think anyone could fail to be struck with such a face as that, if it were only from its likeness to your own, Miss Temple."

"Indeed! But Adelaide is ever so much handsomer than I am," said Laura, looking pleased, "though it is true that when this was taken she was about my age. And what think you of the photo opposite!"

"Your sister's husband!"

"Yes. A splendid face, is it not?"

"No doubt. I am not much of a judge."

He bent his head nearer to the book, as if to examine the photo closely, but following the direction of his eyes I saw that they were fixed upon the likeness of the girl. Then he turned the page and looked up at Laura, and again I saw that hungry, longing glance which had awakened Jake's distrust a few weeks ago. It was very strange.

Before supper was ready we had three additions to our party, for Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Temple, when returning from their daily excursion, had run across the Sheriff, and, while the album still lay open before me, I heard his deep voice in the kitchen greeting Sarah Brunt. A minute later he came in, giving a perceptible start when he saw Mike Alison, smiling at the same time with a peculiar grimace.

"Yes," he answered Jack's greeting. "I was uncertain about coming, thinking that p'raps I'd be in the way; but now that I find this friend is here, I'm glad I accepted the invite."

He gravely saluted Mike, and I saw the two men look at each other long and steadily.

When supper was over the company broke up into pairs, Mike Alison and Mr. Gillespie lighting cigars and strolling off to the stables; Jake Blundell and Mr. Temple mixing their toddy, and drawing up to the fire. The girls were in high spirits. It was evident that the favourable impression they had formed of Mike Alison a few weeks ago had been strengthened by their experience of the afternoon.

The next day we took our visitor to the new rancho. Jack was busy and could not come, though Nep went with us; but Kirk Troy saddled his horse, uninvited, and rode behind Laura with a clouded brow.

The unfortunate man was in a restless and excitable state. From the time when

I had taken his gun from him the day before, with a sharp reminder that he must not meditate murder of my friends, he had offered no open hostility to Mike. But it was evident that he neither loved nor trusted him. He would never leave Laura now, under any pretext whatever, if he could help it.

But there were others besides the idiot to whom the presence of Mike Alison gave the gravest uneasiness. Though neither Jake Blundell nor Jack now said a word against our visitor before me, they held more than one council of war over the matter when I was out of the way. Mr. Temple, of course, was already in their confidence, and, it must be confessed, aided strongly with them.

"And now there is another thing," said Jake, after going through the old stories of Mike's bloodthirstiness, and the men he had killed, and the companions he kept, and the terror which he inspired. "Apart from all these, I have just learned a fact which makes me more than commonly uneasy. All Mike's money—at least, I suppose it was all he had—lay in bank at Trinidad. He's taken it all out in a lump. What's he done that for, except that he is meditating some villainy? And what is that villainy? Tell me that! He's foolin' round, I say, with a bad purpose!"

Mr. Temple, remembering the "mauvais quart d'heure" in the saloon, groaned, "What could it be?"

Mr. Gillespie, however, who was present, went off unexpectedly on quite the opposite tack. He listened to all Jake's arguments to the very end without saying a word. Then he made quite a speech in reply:

"I can't say that I think you've proved your case at present. Everything you tell me, and lay such stress upon, might be explained just as well the other way. He's foolin' round for a bad purpose, you say—an infernal purpose. Well, he is foolin' round, there's no doubt of that; but why for a bad purpose? Why, he's always looking hard at Miss Laura! Well, so am I, and so are you, and so is everyone else who gets a chance, except Jack, who stares at Nep. Why not account for it naturally, and say straight out she's an almighty pretty girl! Then he has not shot anyone for a month past, and you say this points to the conclusion that he's bottling up for a good old tear round when his plans are matured. Why? It seems to me, now, much more natural to suppose that the

society here has a softening influence upon him, specially that of Harry, whom Mike cares for, I believe, as if he were his brother; and it is said that even Mike Alison's chief pleasure does not lie in plugging his friends. Yes, I'm well aware of what he has done in the way of shootin', Jake; I know all about it. I understand the peccoliarity of all that money he had at Trinidad being withdrawn in a lump the other day, without a reason being given. But, come to think of it, it is his own; and we don't all let the world know what our private business is, or will be. And so," concluded Mr. Gillespie, with the ghost of a twinkle in his brown eyes, "it just seems to me, boys, that about the sensiblest thing we can do is to mind our own affairs, and let Harry and Mike mind theirs."

There was another person at Eagle Tail Rancho who was made desperately uncomfortable by the suspicions of Jake Blundell. This was Nep Gillespie.

A week after Mike took up his abode with us, she was riding alone with Jack, and, for the first time in his presence, broached the question of Mike's past life.

"Yes," he had answered drily, "I have no doubt some peculiar things have happened to him. He is a very peculiar man—more peculiar than pleasant."

Nep looked at her companion with curiosity. "I think him very pleasant," she said.

"You don't know him as well as I do."

"Indeed! How many times have you met him, then, before he came here?"

"Three or four."

"So have I. I danced with him once."

"A great honour!"

"Well, I had a real good time. He was the best partner there."

Jack was silent a minute. Then he said in the tone of one who has made up his mind upon a difficult question.

"I know nothing about his dancing; but I do know what you do not apparently, that he's a great scoundrel."

"But why should we fear him?"

"Why! Can't you understand that a man without principle, such as he, is never safe? Suppose he wanted to possess something here very badly, what would prevent him taking it, if he got the chance? I thought that perhaps you might help us. Neither Harry nor Laura will hear a word against the cuss, and believe that he stays here simply because of his friendship with Hal—or some such bosh. Can you

enlighten them? They are nothing more than babies, after all, or they would know that one who's killed as many men as Mike Alison during the past five years for the pleasure of killing, can't help going on until he makes a false step some day, and kicks the bucket himself. But, Lord bless you! They go on treating him like an ordinary Christian; trusting him more every day; until I get so wild that I long to draw upon him myself, and end it, though I know how surely it would end me."

Jack paused here, having delivered himself of the longest speech that was ever known to fall from his lips. Nep made no answer for some time. She knew the nature of her companion well. A matter of great urgency alone could draw from him such a serious and earnest expression of opinion as the foregoing.

Yet her belief in Mike Alison, though shaken, was not by any means destroyed. It was stunned, not killed. After a few minutes' thought she gathered herself together again, and said gravely:

"But, Jack, there are one or two things that I cannot understand if Mike Alison be all you say: if he has done so very many wicked things, why is he allowed to live? Of course I know what a good shot he is, and all that; but I also know enough of men in our country to be quite sure that an unmitigated villain would not live long about here."

Jack nodded.

"Yes, that is so; but don't discount his shooting power, and, more than that, his watchfulness. Three times have cowboys, hankering after the reward offered for Mike's life, slipped into a saloon behind him and waited their chance, and every time he noticed this, and, as the man reached for his derringer, turned and shot him through the head; the folk about believing he must have done it for fun, until the dead man's pockets were searched and the guarantee form found. However, it is a fact that he is not to be classed with such out-and-out villains and ruffians as Blossie and Worrall. If he rides away with your horses one day, he may shoot your deadliest enemy the next. Indeed, it is an open secret that it pays Jake Blundell far better to wink at his raids and to reap the benefit of his fondness for revenge and blood, than to hunt him down. But it's playing with a wild beast who may at any moment take the wrong side."

"I see," said the girl, thoughtfully.

"But there is another thing. What is your notion of Mike's intentions in the present instance? Do you think that he has very bad ones in his mind, or that it is merely a kind of playing with fire to encourage him to feel at home here?"

"I think his intentions are bad," said Jack briefly. "Jake is obtaining private information from a very sure source, which if proved, as it must be soon, will show that he is deliberately working out a scheme of a very infernal nature. You see, Mike is not a common rascal at all. In his way he is a genius, therefore he will not make rough and clumsy plans. With all his recklessness, he has a huge amount of self-control. To show how serious the Sheriff believes the case to be, I may tell you in confidence that he is already in communication with the Governor about a quick supply of troops in case of need. But we won't go into this, and mind you don't say a word about the troops to a soul."

"Of course not," she replied gravely, and then they rode in silence for some time. But in Nep's active mind an idea now began to form, which became more distinct and substantial every minute. At last she said earnestly:

"I suppose I may not know exactly what you accuse Mike Alison of intending to do?"

"No," was the emphatic answer. "I make no definite accusation against the man at all—yet."

"Then you don't know why he is here; you only suspect the reason?"

"Exactly."

"I understand," said the girl very slowly; "I understand. I presume now," she went on in the hesitating tone of one who fears being accused of saying something very foolish, "that no one has asked him the question point-blank. Laugh at me, if you please; but I should like to know."

Jack bit his lip; but he did not laugh.

"No, certainly not. It would be more than any man's life was worth if Mike took offence."

Nep smiled.

"And dare you ask him that question, Nep?"

"I would, without hesitation, if I thought it would do any good. Oh, I am not afraid of him," she added, laughing gaily. "And here we are at home again. Come, let us race to the stable, I am sure my Netty is faster than your Antonio—vamos, amigo."

Jack sighed. He would have preferred to go very slowly, and unburden his soul of something which during the past six months had oppressed it strangely; but Nep's word was law, and he was never very ready of speech, so he missed his opportunity, and they galloped home.

Two weeks passed by. Mr. Gillespie returned to business, and Jake Blundell accompanied him. But Mike Alison showed no sign of leaving; on the contrary, making himself quite at home, and apparently throwing himself heart and soul into the arrangements of furniture and the fitting up of the new rancho. In this he gave most valuable assistance, having a pair of hands which seemed capable of constructing anything.

One morning Mike surprised me greatly by saying that he should be unable to put the finishing touches to the last of the bookshelves at which he was working until the following day, as he was going to escort Miss Gillespie to town. I wished him a pleasant ride, and wondered what Jack would think of this freak. He did not, however, seem at all disturbed when I informed him of the fact. It was evident that he expected it.

So the black mare, Netty, and the buckskin horse, Leone, with their respective owners, loped briskly away, side by side, when breakfast was over. It was past sundown when they returned. We looked at Nep curiously. She was still grave and thoughtful, but talked more freely than had been the case for the past few days. The mantle of her former silence, however, seemed to have fallen upon Mike Alison. The old expression of intense watchfulness, which had been far less noticeable lately than in former days, had now returned. He constantly glanced at Jack with a restless, questioning look, and the familiar curtness of speech and manner gradually superseded his newly-acquired refined and gentle tone.

The girl had made up her mind to put that question to Mike, of which she had spoken in a tentative manner to Jack. It required rare courage, however; and thinking over all the people I know, or ever have known, I can remember no one but Nep who would have done such a thing.

"Mr. Alison," she said at last, "I asked you to kindly ride with me to-day, because I thought it right to say something to you, which I—which I felt should be said, both for your own sake, and for that of very dear friends of mine."

She stopped a moment here to steady her nerves and shape her words in the best possible way. Her companion bowed and turning slightly toward her, replied gravely:

"Please speak out, Miss Gillespie."

"Thank you, I will."

Here the girl raised her flushed face and looked steadily at him.

"I am going to ask you a question which will seem very impertinent. What I want to know is this: Why have you, a man who, I am told, has never spent two consecutive weeks at one house for five years past, taken up your abode so quietly and resolutely at Eagle Tail Rancho?"

Nep stopped to get her breath—somehow she seemed to have very little about her at this moment—and watched the effect of her words anxiously. She expected Mike to frown, start, exclaim; to do anything, in fact, but what he did, which was to turn slowly away from her steadfast look, and shake his head, with a smile, half sad, half bitter.

"You are very angry?" she said quickly, as he did not speak.

"I am a bit sorry," was the quiet reply. "I am a bit surprised, but not angry—at least, not with you."

"You will answer my question then?"

"That is another matter. Are you quite sure that you had a right to ask it?"

Nep blushed hotly. Then she remembered Jack's words, and recovered herself.

"I said that it would seem impertinent. I see you think it so. But please answer my question."

Mike stroked his horse's mane reflectively.

"So," he said slowly, talking to himself more than to her, "so the folk are on the jump about me, eh? And you want to know why a murderer, a man whose hands are dyed with blood—oh! I know—a man like me obtrudes his presence upon respectable rancho-folk? Truly, Miss Nep, it is a difficult nut to crack, a nut with a nasty taste; and, what's more, I fear that I must leave you and your friends to break your teeth over it just at present. But I will answer your question.

"I came here because Harry Thornton invited me; I stay because he wishes me to do so; and as long as this is so, I shall continue to stay if I see fit, because, for the first time for five years, I have an object in my life. That is all I can tell you. Is there any other question you would like to ask?"

"No, thank you."

And nothing more was said by either until they reached the town. Nep had cast her die, and lost. She was no wiser than when she left Eagle Tail Rancho.

A few days after this, when Mike, Laura, and myself were returning from the new rancho, having put the last completing touch, a horseman galloped up and saluted Mike. I had seen the man before; it was he who had told the tale of Laura's capture, and Pete Worral's discomfiture, before the bar of Menke's saloon. While they were talking, Jack strolled up on foot, for we were close to home, and I noticed that he looked upon the conversing horsemen with a particularly benevolent smile.

Presently Mike wheeled and rode up to us; he was grim and anxious, and said hurriedly:

"I am sorry, friends, but I must be at Cimarron to-night. I've urgent business there." He gripped my hand. "Good-bye, Harry. I'm glad I've seen all the house-fixings through before I went, I shall run down on the twenty-ninth, to be in plenty of time for the wedding. Good-bye, Miss Temple." And with a wave of his hat he dashed off at a speed with which the horse of the cowboy, who accompanied him, had considerable difficulty in keeping pace.

"Ay, ay," growled Jack, as he watched the swiftly retreating figures. "He's quite right, and so was Jake. We have not seen the last of him yet, confound him!"

CHAPTER IX.

A FISH OUT OF WATER.

THE eighteenth of December was the day fixed by the Reverend Jonathan Chapin for his arrival at Eagle Tail Rancho, a week before the wedding. It had not been thought that he would appear upon the scene of action so early, but he returned from the East sooner than we had expected.

The reverend gentleman was due at noon, but it was nearly sundown before Kirk Troy, who was chopping firewood, reported that "a cuss on a burro was makin' for the rancho spy-like," and we knew that our man was here.

Jack and myself at once adjourned to the porch. On the slope of prairie to the northward someone was approaching mounted on a donkey of patient aspect. It was a black donkey, of large, strong frame, much heavier in build, and longer

in limb than the English ass; yet its master's feet were within a few inches of the ground, and at times it was an open question whether they did not actually touch it.

The ranchemen about Cimarron indulged in many candid expressions of opinion concerning the Reverend Jonathan and his burro. Mr. Gillespie seriously asked him more than once whether a religious man of twelve stone ought to ride a donkey at all, if he did not make a practice of carrying it himself for a part of every journey.

A curious and striking spectacle did the reverend gentleman present as he came towards us. Upon his head was a narrow-brimmed "wash-basin" hat, tied closely round with a capacious red woollen scarf, to protect his ears from the cold. He wore a long dark ulster, so disposed as to cover nearly the whole of his donkey as well as himself, and from beneath this garment his feet appeared conspicuously, being held at right angles to his burro's sides, with gently-elevated toes.

When Mr. Chapin reached the house he solemnly introduced himself, and shook hands. Then he dismounted with as much dignity as if his donkey were a thoroughbred, and, giving the reins into my hands, remarked graciously:

"I should be much obliged, young man, if you would place this beast in your stable, and fodder him well. I have ridden him from Stockton this afternoon, and he is weary."

After which he promptly made his way past Jack up to the kitchen fire.

I looked after the man with an astonishment and disgust too great for words. Of all the cool things that any one can do on the frontier, none is so cool as to ask a stranger to attend to his horse. It is nearly as great an insult as it would be in the East to expect a white woman to clean his boots.

When I returned to the rancho I found the traveller basking before the parlour fire, and making himself very much at home. His long limbs were reposing at full length across the hearth, and he was smiling at some remark of Nep's with superb condescension.

The Reverend Jonathan Chapin was a thin man, with high cheek-bones, a very long nose, and rather small eyes, which he had a habit of half closing when making a remark of any length, and giving his listeners a strong impression that he was

repeating a lesson, well learnt by heart. This mannerism was rendered the more conspicuous by a slow and deliberate utterance, and a voice with a strong nasal twang. He was clean shaven, and had dark, straight hair, worn rather long, and parted in the middle. In dress, Mr. Chapin was strictly clerical, and it is not to be denied that his spotless white tie and long black coat gave the place a civilised and respectable appearance, and made the flannel shirts and buckskin garments worn by Jack and myself look extremely rough and uncouth.

Supper was now served, and after the meal, warmed with good coffee and mutton cutlets, Mr. Chapin became mildly talkative.

His remarks, like those of many other men, were principally about himself and his work. He gave us interesting reminiscences of efforts to plant knowledge of true religion in the darkened minds of Western men, which did not happen to have been very successful as a rule; but Mr. Chapin was very complacent about the size of his congregation.

"I pay frequent visits, you see," he said, "to my neighbours. It is this which answers so well.

"I thought I would try preaching in the saloon—yes, in the saloon itself—at the new town of Otero, at night. For this purpose I specially prepared a course of three sermons upon the besetting sins of settlers in the country. The first, dealing with want of respect for sacred things, and expressed in language as clear and strong as I could command; the second, touching upon the widespread use of bad language—a continuation practically of the one before; and the third, warning my misguided friends of the retribution inevitably in store, if they continued in their wicked uncharitableness towards the Red man."

"This was very brave of you," said Nep.

"Well," he replied with a modest sigh, "I was told—warned by your father, Miss Neptuna—that the risk was great; but I felt that my duty was too clear to be mistaken; so I went in one evening when I knew the place was full. Yet, after all"—here Mr. Chapin sighed again, and continued with sad, impressive dignity—"I fear that my words only touched the hearts of very few. I had high hopes at first, for as I gave out my text, with a few introductory remarks, the card-playing stopped, and even the whisky-drinkers put down their glasses. Before I had gone far, however, a very extraordinary thing happened.

The men left the place. They did not go all together, but disappeared one by one until, when the moment arrived to make an appeal to their better nature, there was only the bar-keeper left. Yes," Mr. Chapin went on in a slow and meditative tone, while a preternatural silence reigned in the room, "I do not remember ever being more surprised at anything in my life. I even stopped speaking, a thing which under no circumstances have I done before, and looked questioningly at the bar-keeper. He was a Christian man, and had been to the church more than once. 'James,' I said, 'what does this mean?' 'Sir,' he answered, 'you've been too much for 'em.' 'I don't understand,' I said, bewildered still. 'It's clearer than daylight,' he replied, 'the boys are taken slick aback'—I repeat his own words—'pulled off their feet. They've never been spoke at before. Why, they're sensitive as girls, if you only knew it. Can't stand them words of yours, any more'n a cat can boiling water. Didn't you tell 'em the Lord would reckon wi' their sins hot, when He cotedh them—or words to that effect? Well—then, what can you expect? I tell you, parson, the boys didn't know the Lord had heard of Otero yet! Why, the railway depôt's only been built six weeks!" I was shocked, as you may well think, but after a little further talk I went away, feeling that my friend was right. I have not been there again, but I shall go, and—and on the next occasion I shall be more gentle in my manner. It was a curious experience, was it not, sir?" turning to Mr. Temple, who only nodded in reply.

"Since then," continued Mr. Chapin, "I have confined myself to visiting the surrounding ranches: I find this answers well."

"What an untold blessing it must be to the ranche-folk!" said Jack pensively.

"Yes," replied Mr. Chapin, in a dry tone, "they dew seem to appreciate the visits. I make a rule of calling in the week, and spending an evening with them, if I don't see them at church on the previous Sunday, and you wouldn't believe, sir," addressing Mr. Temple with a quiet smile, "how reglar their attendance becomes after that."

"I can quite understand it—quite!" said the old gentleman testily, for his nerves were beginning to suffer from the continuance of Mr. Chapin's eloquence.

I think it was the day after the pastor arrived that Jack and Nep became en-

gaged. They went out for a ride together, and did not return until late. As I opened the door, Nep ran by me with peculiar swiftness, and then Jack's voice came out of the darkness, with a husky tremble in it I had never heard before.

"Harry, old boy, come here and shake hands. Congratulate me, lad. We're engaged."

There was a general jubilation that evening. Two of the precious bottles of champagne were drawn from the cellar—for Mr. Gillespie had returned with the young people—and healths were drunk and songs sung, until even Mr. Chapin brightened up, and volunteered to sing a ballad, which a friend of his had composed. It was a beautiful love-song, supposed, I believe, to express the pangs of a broken-hearted and forsaken lover, and was applauded by us to the echo. But as the singer had forgotten most of the words, and was not at all sure of the tune, we did not ask for an encore.

In the very midst of this jollity the dogs barked and we heard a halloo. Jack promptly threw open the door, and went out, hospitality beaming all over his face. When he returned, he was very much sobered down.

"It is Mike Alison," he said quietly, resuming his seat by Nep. "See to him, will you, Harry?"

I sallied forth now and found my friend at the stable. He smiled when I told him the news.

"Well," he said, "I shall be intruding on a family party, and I will not come in to-night. Give my excuses. I have blankets here, and I had my supper at Stockton."

"What nonsense," I replied contemptuously. "Come in, man, at once."

Yet I could not help thinking of Jack's face when he told us who was here. Things turned out, however, very differently from what I expected. Even Jack acknowledged afterwards that the rest of the evening could not have been merrier than it was. Mike Alison seemed to have cast his skin. His grimness and taciturnity had disappeared. He set the girls down to the piano, and made them play everything they knew; and when they rose at last, he astonished us all by taking their place with a laughing apology, and after a few false starts singing an old English hunting song in a rich baritone, and playing his own accompaniment.

"Oh, if Jake Blundell were only here to see!" said Laura, as we frantically ap-

plauded the performance, and asked for more. "But, Harry," she now whispered, excitedly, as Mike began a plaintive love ditty, "I have heard that voice before, I know I have. Oh, where could it have been? It seems to bring back old days! Yet I cannot—I cannot remember when!" And though Laura thought over it all the evening, she never came nearer to a solution of the problem.

The only person who thoroughly disapproved of the appearance of Mike Alison was the Reverend Jonathan Chapin. Jack declared that he looked upon Mike as if he were actually Satan in person. A collision between them was inevitable, and came at last one evening at supper.

During the day the reverend gentleman had been greatly exercised in his mind, for Jack had gravely and emphatically told him that it was his duty to say something to Mike about his manifold sins; and Mr. Chapin, though perfectly ready for the work, was in great doubt as to what kind of holy water would have most effect upon this friend. At last he decided upon the brand, and as we sat down to our evening meal, he began his attack.

"There is one custom, sir, which I find very rife among certain classes in this country, and upon which I should like a candid opinion from you. I allude to the frequent shooting of human beings that goes on in these saloons and gambling-dens. I suppose there is no means of stopping this horrible practice?"

"There's one which might be tried," was the curt answer. "Fine the saloon-keeper five dollars every time he sold adulterated whisky."

"And what would be the effect of this restriction?"

"To keep men's brains cool, and prevent them from going mad after a single cocktail. Do you know what firewater is like, sir?"

"No, I do not," said Mr. Chapin, with marked emphasis. "I do not. But I fear that it is the men whose brains are clearest, who do most of the shooting."

Mike Alison bent his eyes on his questioner with a look of great curiosity.

"You're right," he replied coolly. "But those men generally have a good reason for shooting—I speak from personal experience."

Mr. Chapin bowed.

"Yes, yes, I see. You defend this practice by intimating that those who are killed deserve their fate. This is a terrible

doctrine, my friend; a fearful thing to say. However, I will waive this question for the moment. But there is another. Sir!"—and here Mr. Chapin laid down knife and fork and accentuated each word by striking the palm of his left hand with his right forefinger—"there is one thing which cannot be defended, even by you. Granted that it be justifiable to kill a man under any pretext whatever—though Heaven forbid that I should grant it! even for the sake of argument—but passing that, I say it is not justifiable, from any point of view, to cause the agony, the long lingering suffering, which must be the lot of these wounded, in these affrays, but not quite until death."

We all looked at Mike. He was thoughtfully rolling a bit of bread between his fingers and thumb, and staring placidly at his questioner.

"I quite agree with you," was his unexpected answer. "Your remarks are very just, and do you credit. Only, I may say, that if you wish to take me to task with them, you have got the wrong lamb by the tail. They don't apply."

"But am I not right in supposing you to have been frequently connected with such matters?"

"Certainly. I have seen many a man fall," said Mike calmly. "But, Mr. Chapin"—here he paused to sip his coffee—"I have never wounded a man in my life."

His words were pronounced with a marked deliberation and distinctness; their meaning was obvious. The Reverend Jonathan said no more.

CHAPTER X.

THE REASON WHY.

IT WAS the evening before my marriage-day; a quiet, peaceful time, which will stand out in my memory with peculiar distinctness to the last moment of my life.

Every arrangement for the morrow had been made, and all Laura and I had to think of was how to make ourselves as agreeable as possible to our friends. For the last time our large family party gathered round the supper table at Eagle Tail Rancho.

What fun we had when supper was over, disputing as to who should wash up the things; for Sarah Brunt was away at the new rancho, to receive us on the morrow. The peals of laughter there were all round

the table when Mr. Temple announced that it was his turn, and gravely offered to wipe if Mr. Gillespie would wash. Then, in the midst of it Mike Alison, without a word, suddenly bore away the meat-dish and coffee-pot to the kitchen, and had to be waylaid on his return by Jack and myself and held prisoner by force; and finally how the discussion was settled by the tossing of a five-cent piece, dexterously manipulated by Mike, and which resulted in Nap and Jack being chosen for the office.

I was watching Mike's face in a lazy manner, remarking the change in its expression since I had seen it first. The wolfish look in his eyes had now disappeared completely, and the forbidding set of the lips, so noticeable when he sat among his gang at his own camp, was rarely to be seen. His face was no longer that of a man with a hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him; but rather that of a stern, melancholy man, who had lived a life for the past few years which had worn him to the bone.

"Where did you learn to play the piano so well, Mike? You quite took my breath away, last night, when you struck up. Is it really ten years since you were in England?"

"Yes," he answered briefly. "Ten years to-morrow, I believe."

"You remember the exact day when you left the old country, then?"

He replied with a quiet smile.

"It seems queer that I should, doesn't it? I think it's because the old days have been very much in my mind lately. I am among English folk, you see, for the first time for many years."

"Yet you don't like being reminded of your youth?"

The question was rather a rude one, but we all of us forgot ourselves at times.

Mike smiled again, with one of his quick glances.

"No, I do not," he said simply. "It is interesting, but not pleasant. What is pleasant, though," he continued dreamily, "yet strange, is to find myself sitting in a ranche like this, among friends, after the life I've lived lately. Do you remember the night at my camp, Harry?"

"Can I ever forget it?"

He chuckled drily.

"By George! how you wired into us. What was it you said? A mean, miserable——"

"Don't, man! Let bygones be bygones."

"H'm! I'm not sure that it's always advisable; the other part of the saying takes my fancy most." He had finished his pipe and was leaning forward in his chair, as he spoke; he laid his hand upon my knee, continuing in a low tone, "Harry, old man, you may be surprised to hear it, but, do you know, I guess I'm going to follow this idea out for the future. I thought that there was a good deal of truth in what you said that night."

I started and caught hold of his arm.

"What do you mean?"

"What I say. The old business has rather lost taste lately, and I shall give it up."

"No!" I exclaimed incredulously.

"It's a fact; but don't shake me to pieces"—and he laughed as I wrung his hand with all my might—while Laura paused in her winding with sparkling eyes, and waited for her turn. "Good resolutions, Miss Temple, are made to be broken, you know. I thought I'd tell you both, though, before to-morrow. It is a sort of left-handed wedding-present. Yes, old man, thanks to you, I have had enough, I think, of the old life."

This was news, indeed; almost too good to be true. But Mike did not give us time to express our feelings on the matter. For he now wheeled round abruptly, and addressed Mr. Gillespie.

"Did you ever know or hear of such a mild winter as this, sir?"

"Never," said the storekeeper, emphatically. "Not a fall of snow yet. We shall pay for it in spring, I dessay."

"Very probably. You've not heard any news of the Apaches lately, I suppose?"

"Not I. It's not often you do this time of year. A tidy scare we had in the summer, though. I thought we'd have trouble more than once. But we scraped through without any, except for what happened to you. He's a 'cute cuss, that chief they have now—Black Scalp—and knows the country well, it is said. It's a comfort to think that the Redskins have their reservations to go back in the winter."

"H'm!" grunted Mike, drily. "I suppose they are in their reservations."

Mr. Gillespie laughed.

"Well, everything is possible in this country. Perhaps they've gone to Washington, and thrown themselves on the charity of the Quakers. I wish they would. Poor brutes! they've a hard time in winter. I think I'd rather be a nigger than an Indian."

"They take it out of the White man, though," said Mike, bitterly, "when they get to him."

Mr. Gillespie nodded.

"That is so. I hear two hundred families were massacred by Black Scalp in the Southern counties this summer."

"How dreadful!" said Laura, shuddering. "Are the women and children killed as well, then?"

"All," said Mike, grimly. "The men first, because they are troublesome; then the helpless ones. There is your poor Red man, Mr. Chapin!"

"Well, come, now," said Mr. Gillespie, mildly, "they have a poor time enough when they are dropped on by whites. How many would you calculate to leave alive, Mike, if you came across Black Scalp and his braves?"

"Not one boy," was the curt reply, "after what happened down South. Please to remember that I am not an officer in the United States Army. It would not be to my advantage to be always twenty-four hours' march behind the Redskins, as it was to a certain general we know of. The rank and file were not to blame last summer down South; it was their officers, who even refused to supply ammunition to the settlers when they had corralled Black Scalp. What sort of time would you have had in this county last summer if you had accepted the offer of troops, instead of taking the business in hand yourselves, and preparing quietly for the Indians to make a start? There is only one thing which will enable the army in this country to retrieve their honour. Put their general over a slow fire for five minutes, and threaten to repeat the punishment in as many weeks if he does not do his duty. Black Scalp would then be swept off the face of the earth in a fortnight."

Mr. Gillespie shrugged his shoulders, and flipped the ash off his cigar.

"It's quite true," he said, briefly.

"Then is this settlement in danger of Indian raids?" said Mr. Temple, questioningly.

"Not now," replied the storekeeper, with much promptness. "The railway will be at Stockton in March, and the place settled up wonderfully by June. But last summer and fall it was a near thing."

"They do not attack in winter, then?"

Mr. Gillespie shook his head, and smiled with the compassion of a Western man for an ignorant tender-foot.

"No, sir. Apaches live in tents, and,

when on the war-path, in the open air. The climate three hundred miles to the south-west suits 'em better than ours at this time of year. And there they will be now, starving along as best they may, poor cusses, upon what Government allows them, and the proceeds of a little hunting. Ain't that the case, Mike?"

"It is their usual practice," he replied evasively. "Miss Temple, now that you have finished winding that wool, may we have some music?"

The last skein had now left Kirk's unwilling hands, and Laura obediently folded up her work, and went to the piano. At the sound of playing Nep and Jack returned from their labours, and we then spent a pleasant social evening. But a tinge of sadness ran through it all. Mr. Temple was to leave for England very shortly, so that this would be nearly the last we should spend together.

At ten o'clock the girls retired. They were scarcely gone when the gruff shout of the Sheriff was heard outside. He had arrived two hours before his time. Jack went out promptly to see after his horse, while Mike and I turned into the kitchen, to fry mutton-chops and open a bottle of brandy, for a night ride at that time of year was no joke, and the man must be half frozen. To our surprise Jake did not appear until our preparations were almost completed. At last we heard the door slam, and his deep voice greeting Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Temple. When he came in I saw at once that something serious had happened. He was standing near the fire warming his hands, the other men looking at him in silence. The Sheriff made no movement when he heard our steps, merely growling out a "good evening" in the grumpest of tones. I looked at the others for explanation with raised eyebrows, some instinct warned me that it would not be well to ask Jake point-blank what was the matter. But there was no satisfaction to be obtained from the surrounding faces. Jack's was as grim as Jake Blundell's own; Mr. Temple's bewildered; Mr. Gillespie's half amused. Kirk's threw the most light on the question, for it was very white as if with fear, his mouth was slightly open, and his large eyes were fixed intently upon Mike Alison. I followed them, and then started, for Mike was standing straight and stiff, his back against the wall, and his face wearing the look which had not been there for many a week. It was his voice which broke the silence now, a curious vibration

in its tone that reminded me of the warning he had given to the crowd at Menke's, after the shooting of Worrall and Blossie; yet the words he used had been spoken every night since his first arrival among us.

"Harry, I'm going to the stable to water Leone, will you have a stroll round before turning in?"

I was about to acquiesce readily, when Jake kicked the pine log close to his foot and shook his head. It might have been an accidental movement, but I did not take it to be so.

"Thanks," I replied, yawning, "I guess I won't to-night."

Mike nodded as though he expected the answer, and moved slowly towards the door, his eyes bent upon the ground. As he turned the handle, he threw his head back in the old defiant way and looked at Jake Blundell with a watchful, questioning glance. It was curious to note how the look was met by the group near the fire. Mr. Gillespie nodded pleasantly and said "good night"—Mr. Temple also. Jack and the Sheriff neither moved nor spoke, but met Mike's eyes with a steady glare, which caused his heavy brows to draw down into the straight line, and his jaws to stiffen, until anyone who had only seen his face but a few hours before would have now almost failed to recognise it. "Good night, gentlemen," he said simply, passing quickly out, and closing the door behind him sharply.

The Sheriff drew a deep breath, and marched into the kitchen. "Of all the brazen-faced devils I ever saw," he muttered between his teeth as he went on, "that man is the worst." He would say no more until his hunger was satisfied. When he had finished everything on the table, and drunk enough brandy to have killed some men, Jake drew his chair round, and looked keenly at me.

"A few weeks ago, young man, I made some remarks about the cuss just gone out, which you did not like the taste of. Since, I have not touched on the subject with you, 'cos a man who only suspects, and ain't believed, had better say naught, till he kin prove his words. As I'm in a position to do that now, I bring the concern before you again; and here's things as they stand at this moment:

"Listen to this, then. A mile to the East of Stockton away up in the Sugareet Cañon, are camped near upon a hundred men. They're well mounted, and well

armed, and as they're mostly Texans, are as rough a crowd as were ever seen. These boys have been collectin' in this locality for some weeks past, but as it has only been gradually, one by one, they only reached their full strength a day or two ago.

"Now, Mr. Gillespie, and all of ye, what do a bunch of boys like that want in a settlement, at this time of year, when there's no round-ups of cattle, nor nothing. What will they be after, I say?"

The storekeeper shook his head, and as the Sheriff looked at him as if expecting an answer, he replied gravely:

"Can't say. It's very queer!"

"Ay," said Jake, "so it is—so it is, until you have the key of it in your hand."

"And that is!" said Mr. Gillespie quickly:

"Mike Alison, sir. It's his money, drawn from the bank the other day, which keeps them boys; it's his business they've collected here to do. Yes, open your eyes, if you will; the proof has come at last of what I said two months and more ago. Here is the leader and chief of them all, the deadliest shot in all this country, the man with five thousand dollars offered for his scalp, at the head of a hundred wild boys, all camped fair and snug in the very heart and core of this settlement."

"What reasons do they give for being there?" interposed Mr. Gillespie, in a hard, cold voice, "they must have some."

Jack chuckled sarcastically.

"Oh, you bet! They've as good a one as they could invent, Indians! Yes, though we're just in the new year, and the thermometer's at zero, yet, if you please, there's danger of a raid by Black Scalp, unless he knows there's a standin' army of White men ready to drop on him; that's what they say."

"Is that all?"

"All they'll tell me or you, or anyone but the man who gave me the first information, and without whom I should have known nothing."

"And who's that?" I said quickly.

"Hermann Menke."

I laughed.

"What! you would take the word of that man? Why, I'd believe Mike Alison's barest statement against the most solemn oath Menke could swear."

"Hold on there," roared Jake, "you don't know what you're talking about. I would not take the word of any man without proof. D'you think I've been idle?

I've seen the boys with my own eyes, I've heard them give the reason, just as Menke told me. Besides, that old fox knew me too well to tell lies. It was only because he'd been letting out Mike's little games that he did not get clean busted on the twenty-first of October. He's been watched ever since—he's being watched now—and none knows so well as he what will happen to him if he has been lying."

"Then what is Mike going to do, in your opinion?"

Jake paused a moment before answering. His face was very grave, and when he spoke it was in a gentle, impressive tone, with none of the violence of his former manner.

"Now, Harry, don't get the idea that this business gives me any pleasure. I'm bound to go through with it to the end, being responsible for the peace of this county, but I don't like abusing a man any more than you do, especially an enemy of mine, such as Mike has been. You ask what he's going to do? He's going to wait until you're settled on El Gato Creek, and then he'll play hell with you!"

"But he does not require a hundred men to do that."

"Yes, because if he'd much less, I'd be on to him, and he knows I've been watching him all along. With a hundred boys he's safe. I can't get near a crowd like that without troops, and I can't send for troops till I've proved some devilment's been done."

I shrugged my shoulders incredulously. But I began to feel cold and numb about the heart, for I could see by the ominous gloom of Mr. Gillespie's face, that his faith in Mike had gone at last, and he had been such a steady friend to him before.

"I can't see that you could stop the sacking of our ranche, by him, and half-a-dozen men, if he were quiet enough. Had he not made such a parade of force you would have suspected little."

"Would I? Do you remember what I said after seein' him at Menke's? Pshaw! he doesn't take me to be such a fool. You're right about one thing, though. He would hardly have made such a buzz about one ranche. But the information I have says that yours would be the first of a large number already marked; that there's a raid projected by Mike, such as we've never seen before. Mind! There never has been, in my twenty years experience of Frontier life, a desperado whipping round quite like Mike Alison, with his power of shooting, and his temper,

which makes him fight like fifty demons rolled into one, and seems to carry him through a scrimmage unscratched, where you or I would be plugged a score of times.

"The truth is, he's a devil. No more, no less, and he must be dealt with as such. Look at his face as he went out just now, was there ever a wicked pair of eyes in the world? Yet, I'll warrant he's been as sleek and soft as a tabby-cat all day with the girls. However, boys, there's one thing quite sure. If we can't break his bank this time, it'll be a pity. Eb, Jack?"

"We'll try," was the grim answer. "Are you convinced yet, Harry?"

I shook my head.

"But you think it looks bad!"

I would have given my head to have answered "No." But I could not. After a moment's thought, I said steadily, "Time will show. Say anything you please. I would trust Mike before fifty Menkes. But when you talk of breaking him, what do you intend to do?"

"Watch and wait," said Jake curtly. "There's half-a-dozen boys of mine in his camp, who'll give notice when a movement is intended. I've already been in communication with the Governor; and Colonel Bonner, Commander at Fort Campion, has orders to supply me with what troops I require at an hour's notice. I can't tell when the first blow will come. It might be to-morrow, though I don't think it. But I'm ready for him. He may show his teeth when he likes. And now, boys, we'll turn in, I guess it's just upon midnight. We mustn't over-sleep ourselves to-morrow morning. One thing more. Not a word to the women—but, hial! there's his step."

Mike now re-entered the room: he went straight to his blankets without a word to anyone, though his eyes swept quickly along the line of faces as he passed us. The others, also, with many yawns, began laying down sheepskins and preparing for bed. I did not follow their example. My brain was in a whirl, and picking up my hat I went outside, scarcely noticing the icy biting which met me as I opened the kitchen door. I walked away from the ranche in the direction of the creek. Could Jake's words be true after all? One thing was perfectly clear. Before I believed these statements, I would question Mike myself. As I reached this point in my reflections there was a rustle behind me, and Mike's hand was laid upon my shoulder. He had followed me. He did not speak for a

moment, but alipped his arm within mine, and paced beside me. At last he said :

"You're out late to-night."

"Yes."

"The Sheriff have much news?"

"Yes."

"Interesting?"

"Very. Surprising also."

"Indeed. What was it?"

His manner was perfectly quiet and composed, but I could feel the arm within my own trembling slightly. He was much excited, and had divined the subject of our conversation.

"It was about you," I replied. "It was asked why a hundred men in your pay should be loafing about town doing nothing."

The murder was out. He did not answer at once.

"And who said that they were in my pay?"

"Is it not a fact?"

"Yea."

"Then it does not matter who said so."

"I should like to know, exactly. But never mind. I can find out. Well—anything else?"

"There were conjectures made."

"And what did you think?"

"I—I did not know what to think, Mike," I turned upon him with choking voice, for I felt keenly how dear he was to me, and the pain of suspecting him was almost more than I could bear. "Mike, you must see how bad it looks. Tell me why those boys are there?"

"Have you heard no reason given, then?"

"It is said that you feared an Indian attack. That was all."

"Yes, I see. Well—that is all."

We were standing still now, in the bright moonlight, facing one another. He was smiling slightly, but his brows were still contracted, and gave a bitter, sardonical expression to his face.

"That is all," he repeated slowly.

"Then it is not enough," I replied, my breath coming short and quick. "Supposing you are right in what you say about the Indians; what object have you in protecting this settlement, every man in which, except myself, would rather see you dead than alive? Another thing is said of you. That the money lying in your name at Trinidad was all withdrawn the other day, and that you are paying these men with it. Is this true?"

"It is true."

"Then—then, what the Devil do you mean by it all?" My temper was giving way under the perplexity and distress of the moment.

"You would not believe me if I told you."

"Try, and see."

"No. I'd sooner leave things as they are. Look here, lad"—his dry, caustic tone had changed to one of great earnestness—"if it would make you see things clear right through, I would tell you everything to-night, just as it stands, though to say out what I should have to do, would be a terrible wrench. But I know that it would make matters no better. I could see from your face, just now, after Jake had said his say, that our friendship had broken. I caught you up and questioned you, because a man must always know how he stands. I see the position, and there's no more to say. You asked me to stay for the wedding, and I shall stay. Then—well, we won't meet for awhile. I've been living in a fool's paradise lately, that's all, and I must clear out. The words I used when you asked my name in Horse Camp months ago, were just the truth, we can never become friends. I've been a desperado for years, whatever I was before, and so I shall remain, I suppose, to the end of my life. You have realised this to-night for the first time, and nothing I could say would bring the old feeling back, so I am not going to try now. Come to bed. Don't look so down, lad. Remember, you are to be married to-morrow."

We returned to the ranche in silence. I felt dazed, stunned, tired-out, unable to think, or fix anything clearly in my mind. But somewhere about me lingered a feeling that no friend I had ever known was so dear to me as this Mike Alison, whatever he was, or might be, and that Jake's indictment was some evil dream or scare, which would disappear when faced boldly in the light of day.

We were none of us quite so early as usual the next morning, and Nep and Kirk Troy were busy preparing breakfast when we appeared. This meal was a silent one. Mike's old taciturnity had returned in full force, and all questions, even Laura's, received only the curtest answers from him, and I could see that not the slightest movement on the part of Jack or Jake Blundell was unnoticed. It seemed to me that the "watching" was rather on the other side. During the next few hours, however, my thoughts

were far enough away from the subject. The wedding was put off until sundown, as the Mexican herdsmen were very anxious to be present. They were allowed to bring the sheep in an hour earlier for the occasion.

There was much to be done, and when all was over, there was only just time to slip away to our respective rooms and dress, to be ready by four o'clock. But the result of the preparations was felt by every one to be satisfactory enough to repay our labours. The service was to be read in the parlour. At the eastern end of this room was a reading-desk of cedar-wood, made by Jack, on which were Mr. Chapin's Bible and Prayer Book. The reverend gentleman was standing behind it at this moment, for he was a punctual man, and it was only five minutes off the hour. The large table had been carried away, and placed in the bachelors' sleeping apartment, and was now decked out with a damask cloth and a fine array of silver and glass.

The rocking-chairs and Mr. Temple's arm-chair had also been removed, and in their places were eight plain, wooden chairs, arranged in a semicircle in front of the parson.

All was ready, even the case of champagne, which was in the pantry, three bottles standing on the shelf—to be opened when the right time came.

The guests now began to collect and take their places; they were in their ordinary dress, though very much brushed up: with well-washed faces, and smooth chins, and boots scrupulously polished. There was Jake Blundell, big and hearty, one mass of burly good-humour, and exchanging sly jokes with Mr. Gillespie. The storekeeper sat between Jake and Kirk Troy, and, consequently, looked smaller than he had ever looked before; but he was as merry as could be, and the life of the party. Beyond him sat two Mexicans, José and Miguel Gallegos, the third and youngest brother—for we employed the whole family—being unexpectedly absent. The truth was, that he was only a lad of fifteen, and having spied a lynx just when he should have started for home, had gone off upon a royal cat-hunt, and was not to be looked for until the breakfast was ready, though, as his brothers said, he was sure to be back in time for that.

The clock over the mantel-piece struck four. At this precise moment the door of the ladies' room opened and Laura came

out, followed by her bridesmaid, Nep. The girls were dressed very simply, the bride in light gray, and Nep in yellow, trimmed with black. Very bright and happy they both looked; and Mr. Temple, who was standing near the door, violated all rules and regulations by heartily kissing them both as they passed him. Then we took our places. I glanced round the room as Mr. Chapin cleared his throat to stop a gentle whispering between the Mexicans. Jack was behind me as best man, blossoming out in a somewhat crinkled suit of blue serge, which had alumbered long in dark drawers, and a wedding-favour made by Nep, a decoration with which every member of the party was provided. Mr. Temple stood near the bride, resplendent in white waistcoat and gold watch-chain, ready to give her away. All the rest were seated except Mike Alison, who had taken up a stand near the window, and was now resting his arm on the sill, looking at Laura.

Mr. Chapin was a good reader, and well aware of the fact, therefore he read very slowly. The attention of all was fixed upon him, and only Jake Blundell heard a light footfall behind, and noticed that Mike Alison had abruptly left the room. With a step as soft and swift as a cat's, Jake stole from his seat, and, after a glance through the window, took up a position of vantage near the door. He was opposite to Laura, and, in spite of the interest of the moment, she glanced at his face, thereby failing to make a response for which Mr. Chapin was waiting at the moment. He looked from his book in surprise, followed the direction of her glance, and then stopped reading. For now the door opened, and Mike Alison came in with a grey, stern face, and behind him little Juan, the Mexican boy, panting heavily, his comical brown phiz drawn and distorted with terror and excitement. Mike did not see Jake standing behind the door, with his right hand concealed, and, without pausing an instant, strode quickly up to our end of the room, saying, in a firm, quiet voice to Mr. Chapin, "I fear that I must interrupt you, sir. This boy——"

Before he could get further there was a sharp click. Jake Blundell had taken a step forward from the door, and presented a cocked revolver at his head. The Sheriff gave no warning, used no threat; simply covered his man, and pressed the trigger. But, before the bullet flew, he hastily threw up the muzzle, and lodged his shot in the

roof, for Laura, heedless of all risk, had thrown herself before Mike with outstretched arms, forcing Jake to change his aim. The whole thing happened so suddenly that we were utterly taken aback, and knew not what to do or say. I had sufficient sense to follow Laura, and stand between the men, as she exclaimed:

"What does this mean? He shall not be touched until you have given your reason. What can have happened?"

"He knows!" roared Jake, now almost beside himself, yet not daring to raise the revolver again; while Mike stood perfectly still, smiling grimly at his old enemy.

"Yes, I do know," he said, quietly. "Thank you, Miss Temple." He took both her hands, and pressed them gently. "But you should not have done this. Let him fire, if he pleases. Jake, will you do it now, or wait till Juan has told his story?"

Mike motioned, as he spoke, to the little Mexican, who was jabbering excitedly to his elder brother.

Jake grunted, and lowered his pistol.

"Let him speak. But, Mike, if you move one finger towards your belt, I'll plug yer, so help me God!"

Mike made no reply, except to say a word in Spanish to Juan, who left his brother and pointed to the south, speaking in a shrill treble:

"Me on mesa just now, and see them coming quick, so quick! They be at ranche in few minutes—in great numbers—big, big numbers!"

"Who?" shouted Jack, for Juan had paused, as if his news were told.

"Who?"

"Los Indios! los Indios Apache!"

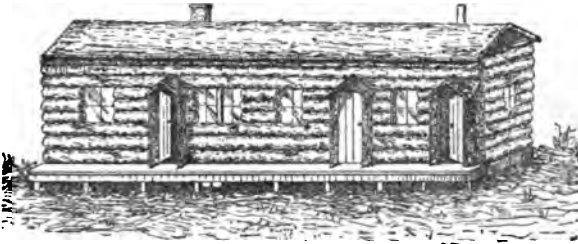
CHAPTER XL.

THE FORTRESS.

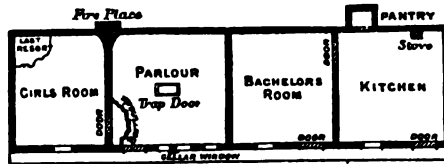
BEFORE we can go on, I find that I must describe exactly the house, in order that the nature of the attack upon us, and the siege which we endured, may be intelligible.

Everybody will very easily understand that there is no pretence of architecture or of beauty in the ranche house of the West. It is a log-house to begin with, though ours was of somewhat stronger construction

than most. It consists of four rooms, opening one out of the other in a straight line, all on the same floor. There is no upper storey. It is a long, oblong, building simple and homely, and its plainness—or ugliness, if you will—is considerably increased by the peculiar construction and texture of the roof. The way the roof is built is as follows. First, there is a flat surface of matched lumber, that is, boards grooved at the sides and therefore fitting into one another. These are nailed to great "vagas"—beams of pine—and the whole, which is a solid, flat wooden ceiling, is firmly secured by huge spikes to the log walls. The lumber is then covered over with many waggon-loads of earth spread quite smoothly until the whole length and breadth of the roof are covered to



EAGLE TAIL RANCHE



GROUND PLAN

the depth of two feet in the middle, and about six inches at the sides. Upon such a roof as this the rain may pour for days as hard as it pleases, here in New Mexico, without making any impression; for the earth, after the first shower, bakes from the heat of the sun into a smooth, impenetrable substance, which, if renewed in parts from time to time, makes a most effective covering—cool in summer, and warm in winter, and the cheapest and most easy to build. It is not, however, so picturesque as the English thatch.

The ranche faced south, all the windows being on that side. The reason for which was, that in spring, hurricanes of dust blow from the north, with a force sufficient to break any glass ever made.

I have already said that the rooms opened out of one another. I think the most remarkable feature of our rancho was the number of its doors. Every room but one had an outer door, which opened, like the windows, on the southern side, and there were besides four doors for inter-communication within. The three outer doors opened upon a covered porch or verandah four feet in breadth, and two feet above the level of the ground. This was constructed in order to prevent the place being snow-bound in winter; for though we do not suffer from many falls of snow in northern New Mexico, they are heavy when they do pay us a visit. Jack took great pride in his doors. He had made them all himself, and no other rancho in the country could boast of such solid pieces of oak, so well put together. The windows, also—of different sizes, from two to three feet square—had strong frames of the same material, and shutters secured by bolts, the like of which were seldom to be seen in these parts. These were also Jack's workmanship. Whatever he did, he did well.

Eagle Tail Rancho inside was much more imposing than Eagle Tail Rancho outside, though the rooms were furnished very variously. The one most to the westward, which was reserved solely for the use of the women—the only room with one door—would have compared favourably with the bed-room of any farm-house in the States.

There were iron bedsteads here, with snowy linen, all complete; rocking chairs, a pretty dressing-table, which the sharpest eye could not have detected to be a packing case turned bottom upwards, so well was it covered by the cunning fingers of Sarah Brunt; and upon this dressing-table was the crowning proof of civilisation, a large and handsome looking-glass. The next room, fifteen feet in length, was the parlour, our living room, with tables and chairs, and all the miscellaneous grace of a man living far from towns.

The room next to the parlour was smaller; when you entered it you felt at once that New Mexico was not in the heart of civilisation quite yet. This apartment was the bachelors' bed-room, and was able to accommodate as many people as could crowd into it, being furnished with true frontier simplicity. In one corner was a heap of folded blankets; in another a pile of sheepskins, three wooden chairs—two without backs—and that was all. The

floor was of rough unplanned deal. On the walls were a few prints from the "Graphic" and "Illustrated London News;" and at one end two shelves, one of which supported an innocent array of old mustard tins and pepper pots, containing gun-powder and shot of all sizes; the other bore piles of oblong yellow boxes marked with a big red stamp, in which were stored some five hundred rounds of rifle and revolver cartridges. Below these shelves was a spacious rack. Here stood two long Henry repeating rifles; three Winchester carbines; and four shot-guns, all in good condition, and fully loaded. Our revolvers we carried on our persons.

The fourth and last room was the kitchen, the sanctum of Sarah Brunt. It was furnished now with every culinary convenience the heart of a cook could desire. Until recently the principal articles in it had been a cracked frying pan, a coffee pot without a handle, and a tin basin. But times were changed. The "batching" days were over.

Behind the kitchen, on the northern side, was a pantry and larder; and to the east a rude scullery and wash-house with a tub in lieu of a copper, and a bucket instead of a sink. The larder, also, until the advent of Miss Brunt, only contained the carcasses of sheep and antelope. But now there were shelves put up, upon which was accumulated a savoury store of good things for the wedding.

Such was Eagle Tail Rancho, a typical log-house of the better class.

But I must not omit an important detail, an original idea of Jack's; though he little imagined, when he worked it out, what a difference it would make on a certain memorable day to all he held dear in the world. This was neither more nor less than a cellar, dug underneath the parlour, and of about the same circumference, which was used as a store-house for goods kept in barrel, such as potatoes and flour; and also, at the present time, for a case of champagne, procured in honour of the coming event, a hogshead and more of genuine whisky, such as no saloon keeper in the territory would dream of selling, and a few bottles of good English brandy. This cellar was a roomy place, cool, yet dry, lit dimly by a small skylight, fitted neatly in under the porch. It communicated with the upper world by a flight of steps and a trap-door in the centre of the parlour.

With the help of the two little cuts

on page 45, you will understand exactly how we held the fort against our friends the Apache Indians.

CHAPTER XII.

UNWELCOME GUESTS.

"Los Indios, Indios Apache."

We understood Mike Alison. He was more than justified now.

Black Scalp's successful raids down South this year, only whetted his taste for the path of war and his thirst for plunder of an unprecedented extent. The unprecedented dryness of the weather enabled his braves to bear the cold of these northern latitudes. With a deep, farsighted cunning he remained concealed in the mountains until such times as all the cowboys, who collect in summer about the frontier towns, were likely to be scattered far and wide over the country, so as to render it impossible for them to be hastily collected. He had not heard of Mike Alison's men, and expected to find many an unguarded settlement at his mercy, and, alas for us! Eagle Tail Rancho was the first place struck.

The crisis was so terrible and so unexpected that even strong-nerved men, such as Mr. Gillespie, Jake Blundell, and Jack, felt as stunned and helpless as children for the moment; and the rest of us, unable by reason of our ignorance to thoroughly realise the danger, waited for them to act.

What could be done? There was no time to run away, for there were but two horses in the stable, and no defence worthy of the name could be made against the numbers Black Scalp would have with him. After making his first announcement, too, Juan told us how he saw the Apache scouts when climbing the eastern side of Eagle Tail mesa, and, how, having eyes as far-seeing as any Indian of them all, he waited until the main body came in sight, and the direction of their approach became unmistakable. Then, and not till then, the boy rushed off to the rancho at full speed. The scouts would be on the hill above the creek in half-an-hour.

"We're just corralled, boys," said Jake Blundell, slowly and heavily, thrusting his revolver back into his sheath; "unless," with an eager look at Mike, as if not certain, even yet, that he might not have had a hand in this, "unless those boys of yours are already on their way!"

"No," said Mike grimly, "Though,

had I known the location of the red devils, they would have been at them, you may be sure. But I could not tell where the attack would begin. I only heard that they had left their reservation, and I judged what was going to happen. And even for this——"

He stopped and looked meaningly at the Sheriff.

"I misjudged ye, Mike," exclaimed Jake hoarsely; "I misjudged ye, that's true; Heaven forgive me for it. But there's no time for begging pardons; fewer words the better. You're the only man livin' who can pull us out of such a hole as this. Will ye help us for the sake of these girls? We'll square accounts and settle the old scores—you and me—another time!"

"Yes;" and Mike held out his hand with a smile. "I'll do my best; I can say no more; that is, if you'll trust me."

Jake gave the hand a mighty wrench.

"I'll prove that, when I catch Menke. Oh! the lying, mean——"

"Never mind him now; there's no time. Juan," Mike caught the Mexican lad by the shoulder, "scoot to the stable, you'll find my horse, Leone, saddled ready, ride him to the camp in Sugareet Cañon; ride like greased lightning. Tell the boys there what's happened, and give my name and bring them along. Not a minute to spare! Sabe! Then be off. Quick!" Juan disappeared in a twinkling. Mike turned to Jack. "The boys can be here in two hours if he rides straight. Have you decided what to do meantime?"

"Shut up the place, I suppose, and try to keep the devils off till the boys come up."

"We can nearly all shoot," struck in Nep bravely, "except Laura and Mr. Chapin, and, perhaps, Mr. Temple."

"I will do my best," said the old man cheerfully.

"And there's plenty of ammunition," Nep continued.

"But supposing they set alight to the place. Are your logs fireproof?"

Jack groaned.

"Well, then," said Mike coolly, "I think I've a better plan, if there's time to work it out. Haven't you some whisky below here?"

"Six barrels."

"Enough to stock a saloon. Good! the first thing to do is to get that stuff out. If the Redskins can be started on it in a friendly way, we'd be safe for an hour at least. You going down, Jake? That's

right; but where shall it be put? Ah, I have it; across the creek in the herder's cabin. Look alive, boys! Now, Kirk, here's just the job to suit a strong man like you."

It is a fine thing to see someone with well-balanced nerve and ready wit, giving orders calmly and cheerily when most men lose their heads; but in such an extremity as this, the sight was almost divine, and had an extraordinary effect upon all who witnessed it. The entire lack of nervousness or anxiety in Mike's manner, the promptitude with which he grasped the situation, and grappled with it, completely transformed the staring, helpless crowd around him in the space of a few seconds. There was hope in the air; we had something tangible to do. Our ship, thrown on her beam-ends by a furious gust of wind, had righted herself, and under the firm hand which now seized the helm might weather the storm.

Mike's order was obeyed with as much quickness as could be expected of men whose only chance for life it seemed. Down the cellar steps rattled the Sheriff, followed by Kirk and the Mexicans; while Jack tore off to the stable for a rope, and with Mr. Gillespie to help him above, and the others pushing below, quickly hauled the whisky barrels up to the parlour floor. Meanwhile, Mr. Temple, Laura, and Mr. Chapin were set to make a clearance of all the paraphernalia laid out for the wedding-breakfast—oh! our poor wedding-breakfast!—sweeping everything into the pantry, by Mike's directions.

Only Nep and myself stood idle. Mike beckoned us, and we followed him to the porch and scanned the horizon line to the southward. Though we could see a mile in this direction, there were no signs of Indians at present. We hoped to be safe for fifteen minutes yet, for long as the interval since Juan's first appearance has taken to describe, it was only a quarter of an hour.

"I can't see one thing clear," said Mike, shading his eyes with his hand, and stooping slightly, keeping intent watch for the enemy. "And I asked you to come here, as I thought you might give me an idea. The boys will get the whisky over to the cabin in time enough, I think. But who's to show the Apaches the way to it? Sarah Brunt would have been the one, for Redskins don't generally touch women when they're sober. But I fear they'll start scalping at once when they see men. I guess the only way will be for all but one

—myself—to hide down in that cellar. They'll never find the place out, for the only opening to it, besides the trap-door, is the window under the porch. I could be sweet with them, give the Chief some of the champagne, and then lead the whole crowd across the creek to that whisky. The sheep are in the corral, so that the brutes 'll be able to get a good feed, and there's plenty of wood on the pile for them to cook with. If only we can keep 'em busy till the boys turn up! What do you think of my notion?"

"Capital," I replied. "But I shall receive the Indians with you. You're not going on such a risky business alone."

He shook his head.

"No one must show his nose above the cellar but me. It'll be a chance even then. If there were two of us, it would be fatal. You don't know the Apache on the war-path."

"But didn't you say that they would not touch a woman?" said Nep quickly.

"Yes. But Sarah's five miles away. We can't try that."

"I think so," was the decided answer. "If Sarah could do it, I am sure I can. I have seen Indians before and spoken to them, often."

Mike started and looked at her admiringly.

"What! Would you face Apaches, Miss Gillespie? I never thought of it. Do you know the sort of men they are?"

"Yes; or at least I've heard, which is much the same thing. Any way, I am not afraid to try, if you think I could do it. I am sure I should be in far less danger than you would, until they've had their whisky, and then we shall be together, shall we not?"

"Yes. We must get out of that cellar as soon as they are over the creek, and blockade the rancho; for if the boys should be a bit late, we ought to have something between us and drunken Apaches. Well, Miss Nep, if you are not afraid, I certainly believe that you can do what is wanted safely. But you must be sure of your nerve. If there's the least danger of your losing it, leave the thing in my hands. Now, just think over this matter while I hurry up the boys, and see that all the arms and ammunition are in the cellar. A scout is on that hill. See him?"

His quick eyes detected long before mine followed, the black spot on the hill, an Indian scout lying flat on the ground.

"They will be upon us, Harry, in less than half-an-hour, now."

We went inside. All necessary preparations had been made. The guns, powder canisters, and cartridge boxes were placed in the cellar, and the Mexicans and Kirk Troy had deposited all the whisky in the cabin, afterwards nailing up the window and door securely, by Jake Blundell's orders.

"I thought it would be as well for the skunks not to get at it too soon," he said, in explanation, to Mike Alison.

"That's right," said Mike, looking about him thoughtfully. "Well, I think we've fixed up all we can. Yes, there's nothing more to be done till the brutes are on us. There's only one thing more to settle now. Who's to receive the devils, and lead them to the whisky? Miss Gillespie offers to do it alone. Will you let her?"

"Certainly not," said Laura, resolutely.

"Let me go with her."

"You?" I cried.

"Do it together," said Mike, quickly.

"It is safer for both, Harry. And two women are always better than one; the danger will be so much less."

"But I won't have it!" cried Jack, emerging from the cellar at this moment.

"Then I shall go without your leave," said Nep, firmly. "Why, Jack, you are not going to begin now to be cowardly about me? We will both go, and we shall be perfectly safe, for we are not afraid; and if anything happens, you will be close by."

"Can you propose anything else, Temple?" said Mike, quietly. "I am responsible for suggesting the idea. My experience of Indians is that if they meet with no resistance, and only see women, they keep quiet—at least until they've prowled all around, and picked up all they can find to eat and drink. They become troublesome then; but I hope that, before the whisky has gone, the boys will be here. We shall then corral Black Scalp nicely. What say you, Harry? Will you let Miss Temple go?"

"I know he will," said Laura, smiling, "if Nep is there."

It was the worst trial that I have ever known. To deliberately allow my darling to go unprotected among these wild, brutal men! I looked at Mike appealingly. "Are you certain that it would not turn out as well if I were to do it?"

"Quite. If they once began, it is not you alone who would be sacrificed, but

every living soul. Let her go. At the slightest scare we can slip up the cellar steps and fight it out."

"Then you may do it," I said, hoarsely. "But mind you do not wander from the house under any pretences whatever. Good heavens, what a risk!"

Jack sullenly acquiesced in Nep's desire, and the girls prepared for their ordeal. They hastily donned their cloaks, and Nep slipped into the outer pocket of hers a loaded revolver. We men made our way to the cellar, and closed the trap-door above in such a manner that it might be thrown back at a moment's notice. Every man was armed with rifle and revolver except Mr. Chapin, who, after vainly hunting for a weapon suited to his taste, held an axe as if he were afraid of breaking it, and sat on a flour-barrel, very much bewildered, and not a little frightened. Amid all the anxiety of the time I could not help wondering whether, if an attack occurred, Mr. Chapin would smite an Indian with his weapon, or drop it on his own toes.

By Mike's order we took up certain positions in the cellar, so that if a sally were necessary, we should not be in one another's way. At the top of the steps stood Jack, his head touching the trap-door, keeping it open about an inch. A repeating carbine was in his hands, and a knife ready to be placed between his teeth. Thus, at the first alarm he was prepared to rush to the protection of the girls. It was the place of honour, and he would give it up to no one. My place was next to him, and behind me stood Kirk Troy, armed with a double-barrelled shot gun, which shook strangely, as though the man who held it was trembling for fear. At the window opening under the porch, stood the two best shots of the party, Jake Blundell and Mike, each training a Henry rifle across the space of ground between the house and creek. It was here that Laura and Nep were to meet the Apaches first of all. Mr. Temple and Mr. Gillespie had their places behind Kirk Troy. The former was armed with a gun; the latter had his revolver and a knife. They were to follow us if we had to leave our hiding-place. The Mexicans were beside Mike and Jake, also armed with rifles, ready to join in a fusillade, when the first shot was fired.

Such was the position of the garrison, when the girls, after carefully locking the pantry door, prepared with pale faces, but

brave hearts, to receive their unwelcome visitors. Nep was to do the speaking, and take the initiative generally, and Laura was to be the handmaid, and assist in satisfying the requirements of the Apache Chief.

The sun had set for nearly half-an-hour, but the sky being exceedingly clear there was plenty of light outside, though within the cellar it was almost pitch-dark. When the girls opened the outer door of the kitchen, they could not help an exclamation of surprise, for covering the broad roll of prairie, at the bottom of which Eagle Tail Creek wound away to the south-east, was a large band of horsemen, approaching the ranche at a gallop. They were in two divisions, one striking for the herder's cabin, the other for the ranche; but when they saw the girls coming to meet them—for by Mike's advice they went some fifty yards from the house—the Apaches closed their ranks and swept onward, all together, with a long shrill cry.

This was the trying moment. The girls did not know what to expect, as the Indians seemed rather to quicken than slacken speed as they approached, and their whoop had a blood-curdling sound. Laura told me afterwards that she felt an almost irresistible inclination to scream and run away, and would have done so but for her companion. Nep, however, raised her head proudly, and laughed, saying with flashing eyes, as she noticed Laura's apprehensions.

"My dear, what's the matter! The cowards are only trying to frighten us. Come, let us go forward a few steps, and show them how little we care for their bluster. See, there is the Chief, the great Black Scalp, himself. He is coming to speak to us. I am so glad. Courage, Laura. Remember that the boys will be here in an hour or two at the most. Courage. Look up and laugh at them."

The Indians were now close at hand, as Nep spoke they drew rein abruptly, and only one man on a graceful bay pony continued to advance at full speed. He pulled up when he came within speaking distance, and then approached at a slow walk, bending forward, and staring intently at the girls between his horse's ears. The Chief was dressed in buckskin, decidedly the worse for wear, and fringed and beaded moccasins. A red comforter tied in a sailor's knot round his neck, and an old battered black hat, such as Mr. Chapin

might have worn when new, gave him a semi-civilised air, grotesquely incongruous with the rest of his attire. But his hard, marked features, and the long black locks which peeped from beneath the clerical hat, prevented any mistake being made as to his identity.

Black Scalp was a tall and rather fine-looking man, with a strong and expressive face, though his mouth was far too large; the nose inclined to be flat, and his complexion a bright red, the skin puckered and creased in a thousand wrinkles.

In carriage he was erect and dignified, as became his station, and, except when he smiled, his looks were not in the least repulsive.

At this time he was perfectly grave, and inclined his head politely as Nep stepped forward, and addressed him in Mexican—the language in which all conversation between them was carried on.

"Have you come to pay a visit to this ranche, Chief?"

"Sí, Senorita."

"We are alone here, but you are welcome. There is wine and meat for you with us," pointing to the house, "and in the corral, mutton for the braves; and fire-water afterwards for all. You will not burn the ranche, Chief?"

Black Scalp looked at her with bright admiring eyes, and shook his head. The qualities an Indian loves most to see in women are audacity and courage. Here was this white girl, though absolutely in his power, offering her hospitality with a queenly air, as if he were here by invitation. He accepted her terms instantly.

"Ah, sí!" he said in answer to her question. "We want food and drink. We will not touch ranchos. But let the senoritas cook at once for the Chief and ten amigos, plenty, plenty mutton, and—the Chief is very thirsty, kind Senorita!"

He bowed again, with a ghost of a smile about his lips which rather spoilt the effect of his first greeting, and then galloped swiftly towards his men, who were just about to strip the ranche of every portable article it contained, and then set a light to it. At a sharp order from the Chief, however, they slunk back, and the girls walked to the place unmolested, considerably relieved in mind.

But there was an arduous task before them. A meal was to be prepared for eleven men with the appetites of wolves. There was some danger, also, that the rank and file of the braves might set fire

wantonly to the herder's cabin, and the whisky thus be entirely wasted. Black Scalp, however, honestly kept his word; and though the wood-pile was ransacked, and a great part of the stable torn away, to supply the numbers of fires which were soon blazing in every direction, the cabin and the ranche were left alone.

The girls now went vigorously to work. The bachelors' bed-room, where the wedding-breakfast was to have been held, was lighted up, and a meal spread, the like of which I much doubt whether Black Scalp and his friends had ever tasted in their lives. In their eagerness to conciliate their grim visitors, the girls placed all the delicacies before them which Sarah Brunt had prepared for a very different party. There were jellies and custards, pumpkin-pies and wedding cake, as well as rounds of cold beef and ham; piles of soft light biscuits, plates of crackers, and a good substantial cheese. On the kitchen-fire two pans of chops frizzled away, manipulated by Laura, while Nep mixed batter with a rapid hand, and fried hot cakes by the dozen.

A savoury smell it was which floated into the cellar through the crack in the trap door. How our mouths watered, and our souls rebelled, as we thought of the feed these thieving Redskins were about to have at our expense. The only comfort was a thought of the Nemesis which would presently overtake them in the shape of Mike Allison's men. But the hardest trial of all was yet to come. Supper was now ready, and when Nep went to the outer door and beckoned with a smile, eleven tall Indians, making no more sound with their moccasined feet than if they had been a party of ghosts, solemnly marched to the table in single file, seating themselves in perfect silence and decorum. Laura then went into the pantry and brought out two bottles of champagne, at sight of which the guests, who had been looking somewhat askance at the jellies and custards, as if uncertain what they were good for, brightened up, and gave vent to their feelings in a low guttural chuckle.

Pop went the champagne corks. Nep poured the liquor out in tumblers, and Laura handed it round. The Indians now began in good earnest. This uncorking of the champagne was the last bitter drop to the listening folk in the cellar, and more than one member of the party relieved himself by heartfelt, though whispered, swears.

It was not long before the Indians

finished their meal. They were hungry, their teeth were good, and they wanted to get to the whisky. But they enjoyed the champagne, and drank bottle after bottle. And now Nep committed a blunder which well-nigh proved fatal to all of us. Instead of refusing to bring out more than half of the twelve bottles lying in the pantry, she opened all. Consequently by the time the Indians had satisfied their hunger and thirst, they were decidedly heated with wine, and therefore dangerous. The party was now less silent than it had been. The men began to use their tongues more than their teeth, and eye the girls with bright and sinister glances. At last the Chief rose, and made his way softly to the kitchen, followed by the braves, no longer in decorous single file. The girls were busy at the stove at this moment, and did not notice the movement of their visitors until they were close at hand; the Chief was at Laura's side when she looked up, smiling at her, and behind were ten pairs of eyes, all fixed upon her face, gleaming rows of teeth below. The sight was so horrible and unexpected, that she started violently, with a nervous cry, which if a little louder, would have sealed the fate of those Apaches, and ultimately of our own; it was only enough, however, to make Jack prick up his ears, and raise the trap-door another inch. The danger was most imminent, for as Laura moved, the Chief laid his hand upon her wrist, and his smile broadened from ear to ear. But before his fingers had time to close, the end of a pistol muzzle was thrust between his teeth with so much force that he reeled, let the girl go, and catching his foot in a frying pan, stumbled awkwardly back against the wall. His assailant was Nep Gillespie, who now stood between the Indian and Laura with angry eyes and closely set lips.

"What," she exclaimed scornfully, "is this Black Scalp's gratitude for good food and wine? When I asked him to sup in my house, I thought he was a great Chief, but I was wrong. He is but a drunken dog. Touch 'la Senorita' if you dare, and I will kill you as I have done many a braver man. *Mios amigos*"—addressing the rest in clear, authoritative tones—the men standing at a respectful distance, grave and sober, "will you taste my fire-water? Yes? Then come with me, for it is in the little ranche. And do you"—again speaking to the Chief, and stamping her foot. "Go first, drunken wolf!"

They looked at each other steadily, the fragile girl, and the tall, strong man, who was celebrated, even among grim Western settlers, for courage and power of will. There was a dull savage glare in his eyes now, yet the smile had not quite left his face, causing it to wear an expression positively fiendish. Black Scalp had not owned the control of any human being since the death of his father, the old Chief, when he was quite a lad. As for the revolver, it was but a paltry plaything, yet he was quelled. Perhaps he heard the stern demurring hum which came with an ominous unanimity from his braves; perhaps the steady eyes and clear sweet voice could do what it would have been useless for force to attempt; be this as it may, with every evil passion awake in his heart, the man obeyed, and passed out of the ranche, followed by his men. Nep came last, and closed the door, then took the lead, and went quickly across the meadow to the creek, up the hill beyond, and so to the herder's cabin. By this time the number of her followers had increased to many a score; and upwards of a hundred stood round the girl as she pointed to the cabin and said in a voice they could all hear and understand:

"Here is the fire-water, amigos, six great barrels. You are very welcome to it. But do not seek for more. Be content with food and drink and leave the ranche in peace. If you do not, I say that not one of you will ever see your homes again. The White men know that you are here. So be careful. Oh, be careful what you do!"

And then she went away, all standing respectfully aside to let her pass.

When Nep reached the ranche, she found Laura still near the stove, pale and silent, nervously watching six Indians, who had made their way into the kitchen, and were poking inquisitively about, examining the handles of drawers, peeping into the pantry, and helping themselves to scraps of the feast. At intervals they cast sidelong glances at the girl of no pleasant nature, but they made no attempt to molest her.

The moment Nep saw these uninvited guests she drew her revolver again, and sharply enquired their business. At first they made no answer; but at last one man explained that they were there by order of the Chief to watch the ranche.

This was very awkward, for the place could not be blockaded while they were about. Presently a happy thought occurred to Nep.

"Laura," she said in English, "go to the medicine chest, and bring me the laudanum bottle, we must send these little dears to sleep."

There were six bottles of brandy in the pantry untouched. It did not take Nep long to make a judicious mixture privately, and then blandly produce a full, well-corked brandy bottle to the communicative Indian. But alas! he would not touch it; there were evidently strict orders abroad on this point. The girls looked at each other in despair; but while racking their brains to devise another plan, they became aware of a curious circumstance.

All the Indians had left the room but one, and this man came softly up to Nep and tapped the bottle, which she still held, in a significant manner. It was delivered into his hands at once, upon which he drew the cork with his teeth and took several hearty pulls. When he had drunk his fill he went out, one of his companions presently appearing in his place, to go through the same performance. This happened six times, until each of the Apaches had swallowed enough medicated spirit to give him his quietus, had he been anything but an Indian. In this way the scruples of conscience of the watchers, and their love for alcohol, were satisfied at one and the same time. No white man knows the intricacies of Apache military discipline, and we can only conjecture that if these men had been court-martialled for this offence—which, for very good reason that will presently appear, they were not—they would have been acquitted on a plea of "no evidence."

However this might be, in fifteen minutes the watchers were as fast as rocks, the outer doors of the ranche were closed, Nep gave a gentle signal, and one by one the little garrison of ten crept from their harbour of refuge to hold a council of war.

The work of the women was over, it was now the turn of the men.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PAYMENT OF THE DEBT.

MIKE ALISON was the last to mount the cellar steps. As he reached the parlour floor he gave his orders right and left.

"This place must be closed, boys, smartly. Jack, fix those patent shutters of yours. Harry, bar the doors. Miss Gillespie, put out that light for the present; they must not have a glimpse of what is going on. Jake, get the parson,

Mr. Temple, and Kirk to help you with the heavy furniture for blocking the windows. José and Miguel, go into the cellar with that lamp on the bracket, light it when you are in the place, and leave it in a safe spot, then bring up the arms and ammunition, and place them on the table. Mr. Gillespie, take up your rifle, and keep a sharp eye round the kitchen and bed-room for spies, while I do the same elsewhere. Be spry as you can, friends. The sooner we're snug the better."

We were busy as bees in less than a minute, obeying Mike Alison implicitly. I do not think there was any order which he could have given that would have been questioned; and the first to follow his instructions were Jake Blundell and Jack, thus acknowledging in the most practical way how much they felt they had wronged him.

Half-an-hour later Eagle Tail Rancho was as secure from outside attack as the ingenuity of man could make it. Every window was secured with a closely-fitting shutter, strengthened further by furniture—a table against one, a chest of drawers against another, and so on. The doors were bolted simply, being too heavy and solid in themselves to require other support; and the one other aperture which it was necessary to stop, the chimney of the parlour fire—a space wide enough for two Indians to slip down together—was effectually plugged by rolling up two mattresses, and tightly jamming them into the cavity with the sides of Mr. Temple's bed—two stout deal planks.

There was no interruption to the work. The Apaches had all migrated to the other side of the creek, and were having a high old time with the whisky. It was only to be hoped that they would not leave the gate of the corral open, and let out all the sheep. On the porch the six watchers snored peacefully, little dreaming of what was going on so near them.

The blockade being completed, a halt was called, and the exhausted garrison regaled themselves with what the guests of the evening had been pleased to leave behind them. Happily, the stores were not completely used up, and for liquor there was plenty of brandy and water, though, alas! all our champagne was gone.

We now began to recover our spirits, and, as we munched away by the light of our kerosene lamp, to speculate coolly on the disgust of the Apaches when they

should return from their carousal and find out what had happened. Mike Alison, alone, sat apart, silent and thoughtful. In the presence of immediate danger his manner had been cheerful, almost to jocoseness, the risk and emergency seeming to act upon his spirits like a glass of wine. But this over, he became again grim and taciturn, though his face never at any time expressed the least fear or anxiety. His silence made us nervous, however, and it was not long before Nep asked him point-blank what it was he feared.

"Nothing," he replied curtly, "if the whisky lasts out. Everything, if it don't. Eat your supper now, and leave it all to me. I have my plans ready, if there should be trouble; but it all depends on the boys."

No more was to be got out of him than this.

How much truth there is in the old saying about ignorance. The boldest tiger-hunter in India is the "griffin" who has just arrived from England. The most unconcerned person on board a ship I sailed in once, when the jib-boom had gone by the board, and a squall had nearly laid us on our beam-ends, was a lad of fifteen, who was on his first voyage. "What fun!" I heard him say to the Captain, who clung to the taffrail, white as death. "This is something like a storm, now!"

Laura, it is true, was very pale and silent, and sat with her hand in mine, eating nothing. Her spirit was high; but thought of the look and the touch of the Apache Chief made her tremble. Nep, on the contrary, seemed to be in the liveliest spirits, and made fun by pretending to condole with Mr. Chapin upon the loss of the champagne in the wickedest manner. I felt strangely light-hearted, also, in spite of our anxieties, and a burning desire just to have five minutes—or less would do—with Black Scalp in a quiet place by myself. For one thing, my instinctive confidence in Mike Alison had been justified to the fullest extent; though why he should have felt it to be his special duty to take all the trouble—nay, to spend all his money—for the protection of our settlement, I could not understand. I was to learn soon.

The grave members of the garrison besides Mike, were the Sheriff, Jack, and the Mexicans. Jake, indeed, was as silent as our leader, though more at his ease, and applied himself to the cold ham and

brandy with immense gusto. In the midst of it, however, he suddenly slapped his leg with an emphatic, though whispered oath.

"Well I'm doggoned if we haven't missed one thing."

"What's that?" questioned Jack, anxiously.

"Why, we've blocked up every crick and cranny in the place. Now, how the deuce are we goin' to plug them cusses when they come from the whisky? They'll hammer the place down, and not git a scratch all the way through. Mike, how's that?"

"That's all right," was the quiet answer.

"I don't sabe. Mike, I don't sabe."

"No! I thought you knew the Redskins' ways, Jake. If they smell out a man, this place will be on fire in two minutes; but if they think, as they do now, that there are only a couple of girls, they won't mind working at the windows quietly for a good spell. At least, that's my idea."

Jake nodded.

"By George! that's so, boss. But look here, when they once dew git through, we can't hold the fort long."

"I know it. But we can make a very decent barricade with the bedsteads, chairs, and mattresses which are left, and give them a warm bath before they get to us. I reckon, by that time, to have the boys here, if Juan has ever got to the cañon at all."

There was a suppressed bitterness in his tone as he spoke, which struck me unpleasantly.

"Do you think they ought to be here now, Mike, if the boys had ridden straight?"

"We'el," he said slowly, as if he did not relish the question, "I would not wish to go so far as that; but it's a fact that the very second the boys know what has happened, they'll be on the way at a lively pace, and he's been gone a fair while. Hist! now, I hear a snake on the porch!"—he dropped his voice to a whisper—"The fun will soon begin. Clear away this ruck," pointing to the food, "that barricade must go up at once, in case of accidents. Ah, there's the first blow."

As he spoke there came a dull heavy thud; some Redskin returning from the carousel, had struck the kitchen door with his tomahawk. No more appetite for supper now. We sprang up and obeyed Mike's injunction with feverish haste. By

his order, we took off our shoes and stepped about as lightly as possible, no one speaking above his breath. Our ears were naturally very much open, under these circumstances, and we presently became aware that the place was surrounded by the enemy. Ghostly knocks sounded at the doors, some soft, some heavy. The voice of Black Scalp, decidedly thick in utterance, was audible more than once, asking "las senoritas" to admit him, "to say good-bye." Then crack went the glass of the parlour window, and we could hear the Chief vainly wrenching at the shutter with his knife. Now came a rustle and a scramble on the roof. Some enterprising individual was trying to make his way through, but soon desisted, finding the earth hard as baked brick.

It may easily be imagined the way in which these symptoms of activity outside affected our nerves. Happily, we had not much time to think. Everyone was hard at work conveying all the furniture in the place to the parlour. Here, Jake Blundell, the Mexicans, and Mr. Gillespie were skilfully constructing a barricade in front of the door of the girls' room. In the centre they placed the piano, flanking it with the bedsteads, the whole filled in with chairs and odds and ends, so arranged that the attacking party would have to pull it asunder piece by piece before they could reach those behind; and in all parts were cunning loopholes, through which the repeating rifles would do terrible execution.

The position of the barrier was chosen because, as you will see by the plan, the girls' room had only one small window, and no outer doors, so would make a good sanctuary, should the boys be late in arriving on the scene.

By the time our work was done, the guns and ammunition placed in convenient position, the siege began in good earnest.

Shrill cries of drunken braves were heard on all sides, growing louder and more menacing as the news of the blockade spread abroad. Now and then there was the vicious whirr and thud of a rifle bullet, men firing recklessly at both doors and windows; and, through all, gradually increasing in volume, came the steady thunder of blows upon the parlour window and the kitchen door, the places which seemed specially chosen for attack.

In five minutes from the time the first shot was fired, we were all behind our

barrier, Mike Alison, alone, slowly pacing through the empty rooms. He held a revolver in either hand, and was ready with a hospitable welcome for the Redskin unlucky enough to be the first to force the blockade. Before he took up this position, however, he had carefully placed us behind the barricade. In the first rank, kneeling and training their carbines between chair legs were the Mexicans, good shots both, quick hands with the knife at close quarters, and fierce and active as wild cats. Close behind, stooping so that only our eyes appeared above the barrier, were Jake Blundell, Jack, Mr. Gillespie, and myself. The two first were armed with rifles; Mr. Gillespie with a double-barrelled shot gun heavily charged with buck-shot, a weapon like a small cannon in cool hands; and I handling a revolver, to which I was most accustomed, carrying a ball larger than the bullet of a Winchester carbine, and with a rifled barrel ten inches in length. I was in the open doorway, and behind me Kirk Troy should have been standing with the Henry rifle he could use so well.

Alas! Kirk had to be left entirely out of our calculations now. He could no longer be counted on as an able-bodied member of the garrison. From the beginning he had been in a very perturbed state of mind, and this grew steadily until, when we reached the upper regions, after the watchers were successfully drugged, he could scarcely stand. The quietness of the place had soothed his nerves for a time, and he worked well in the blockade; but from the moment when the first Apache whoop was heard, he had dropped his gun with a frightened whimper and slunk away to the farthest corner of the room, as scared and nerveless as a little child.

In vain did Jake Blundell address him in rough, forcible language; in vain were Laura's attempts to soothe his fears and persuade him to help her in the work of handing ammunition to the garrison. He would do nothing but sit like a frightened rabbit, turning and twisting his great hands, his thin face white as death, his lips twitching convulsively, his breath coming in short gasps, and his eyes almost starting from their sockets in unreasoning, helpless terror.

The poor creature could not even say what he feared; but it was evident that his brain was completely turned. He was now at last, in very truth, a poor, useless,

gibbering idiot. So we turned our backs upon him and settled to work.

The other man in the party still unarmed was the Rev. Jonathan Chapin, who had ceased to have any confidence in his axe. At this moment he was of little more use than the idiot, though he tried with all his might to conceal his feelings. It would have been cruelty, however, to force the poor fellow into action; so he was set behind to tear open cartridge-boxes, measure powder and shot into right quantities, and place them ready for use, under the direction of Nep Gillespie.

Side by side with me in the doorway stood Mr. Temple, with another shot-gun. He smiled as he grasped his weapon, and said cheerily:

"I'm rather stiff for burning powder, lad, and my eyes are not as good as they were; but I've knocked over a few pheasants in my time, and I believe I can bag a bird or two yet. I'll try, at any rate."

"We'll hope that it won't be necessary, sir," I answered. But I felt little doubt about the matter, for, as I spoke, the blows upon the kitchen door were coming with such force that the whole place quivered and shook, and the entrance of the Apaches could only be a question of a few minutes. I could see that Mike thought the same, for he held up his hand at the moment, as if to prepare us for an attack, and then stood in the doorway between the kitchen and the bachelors' bedroom, with raised revolvers, waiting.

The lamp in the parlour, and another where the girls were sorting cartridges, were the only lights now burning. They were to be left untouched, for they would be of more advantage to us than to the Indians, as few of them would be armed with rifles. Civilised weapons are discarded when their brains become fired with whisky; it is then principally a question of knife and tomahawk.

We waited now in grim silence. Our orders were distinct and unmistakable. The signal of the break of the blockade would be reports from Mike's pistols, as he picked off the foremost Apaches. He would then make for the barrier, the Mexicans covering his retreat. If their efforts did not effectually check the first onslaught, Jack and the Sheriff were to join in, and should a Redskin actually reach the barrier, Mr. Gillespie, Mr. Temple, and myself were to conclude the business.

There was a sudden lull in the hostilities. The hearts of some of us grew lighter for

an instant; perhaps the boys were here. No. For now, long, loud and shrill came the Apache whoop, and a storm of blows ten times harder than before rained upon both door and window.

A prodigious crash, and a howl. The door had given way somewhat quicker than had been anticipated, and three Indians went sprawling full length on the kitchen floor. Now came four quick reports from Mike's revolvers, two at a time. Oh, the yell which followed! Never were honest Red men so shamefully deceived! No pale trembling white girls to pray for mercy from men who knew not the meaning of the word. But in their place, with the bright moonlight which now poured through the doorway full upon him, stood a tall man, his eyes shining as green as a tiger's, his hands holding pistols which struck down four of their number before they had crossed the threshold. The first rank of Indians at the kitchen door were Nep's ten guests.

Before the Apaches had recovered sufficiently from the shock of surprise felt at this reception, Mike retreated to the next room, turning at the parlour door to fire once more. It was his last volley, however, for now the window, not far from where he stood, gave way before the furious attack; the table which had been blocked behind the shutter tattered and fell, and a flood of moonlight swept into the room.

Mike was now within the barrier. As he sprang over the side, the Mexicans opened fire at the door, and Jack and the Sheriff at the window, for we were now attacked from those two points simultaneously. The rest reserved their fire for closer quarters.

"Steady, boys," shouted Mike, in tones so sharp and clear that his words were audible above the yells of Apaches and the crack of the repeaters. "Not too fast, mark your men before you let go. Make every shot tell. Don't fire, you two," addressing Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Temple, who were getting excited, "until the devils are close at hand. Harry, come back, you must form the reserve with me. Now, Miss Nep, round the corner with you, keep away from this open door. Mr. Chapin, come here. Ah, your nerves are steadier, are they? Hand the cartridges to the boys, don't let those girls take the risk. Curse that idiot! I thought he'd have found spunk at such a pinch as this. My God, where are those boys?"

It was now upwards of three hours since Juan started on his errand, and we had

expected help in little over two. The only explanation we could think of was that the boy had lost his way. Like all Mexicans he was a good rider, and Leone was the surest-footed and fastest pony in the country.

The struggle could only last a few minutes. Though the continued fire of the Mexicans, Jake and Jack, mowed the enemy down as they made their first charge, and drove them back in disorder, we could see, from the lines of dark faces outside the windows, that their numbers were overwhelming, and every moment we expected to hear the crackle of blazing wood, and to find that the house was on fire. For some unknown reason, however, this common expedient of the Indian was not put in force on this occasion, the Apaches concentrating all their energies in crushing us by main force.

Now another yell, bad enough to hear on the prairie, and ear-piercing beyond all description inside a house, warned us that the second attack was coming; and pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, came the soft rush of fifty pairs of moccasined feet over the board floor. Then the frail barrier shook and swayed under the grasp of many hands.

"Fire, everyone!" yelled Mike, picking off two men who had climbed the piano, and were about to spring into the midst of us. We all obeyed with a will, and six Indians fell back, with cries more piercing than their yell. But the same moment part of the barrier gave way altogether, and a swarm of Apaches sprang at the opening. But Jake Blundell's great form was in the way, and, wielding a clubbed rifle as if it were a walking-stick, he rained such a torrent of blows upon the enemy nearest at hand that they tumbled back right and left in confusion; while behind, short, sharp, and quick as the bark of a terrier, came the reports of Jack's repeater; and the Mexicans, crouching with bare knives, stabbed every man they could reach who had a hand upon the barrier. Yet still the Indians pressed on, those behind treading down their wounded comrades mercilessly, and facing the deadly fire of the White men with the courage born of deep potations of fire-water and their own wild nature. Now Miguel fell forward with a groan, shot by some marksman outside the window. At the sound Mike raised his right hand, his pistol-bullet sped, and this Indian, when just about to pick off the Sheriff, dropped his rifle, and troubled us no more.

Another sharp order.

"Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Temple get inside and reload. Make room for Harry and me."

We dragged them back, for neither heard the words. And then Mike and I stood in the doorway, shoulder to shoulder, seconding, as best we might, the efforts of the gallant three in the van.

Jake Blundell was down at last. He had stepped too far from the barrier in the excitement of defending the breach, had been surrounded, and, in fighting his way back, received a blow on the head from a tomahawk which knocked him insensible. A rush was made for his scalp, as he was a well-known man; but Mike saw the intention in time. With a sharp cry, he sprang forward, struck down one Indian with the butt-end of his revolver, snatched up the tomahawk which was dropped, and, with a swiftness and fury literally demoniacal, cleared the ground of Apaches for two yards and more, and, seizing Jake in his arms, dragged him inside the barricade, turning again with the quickness of light to charge upon those who followed.

It was a remarkable feat of strength, and fully justified a comment made by Jake himself the night before, except that Mike seemed possessed by fifty devils instead of one. In this instance he both saved Jake's life and foiled the Apaches' second charge, thereby giving us time to breathe. Indians never keep up a steady, continuous struggle; their warfare is a series of furious attacks, between which intervals of several minutes often occur.

We looked at one another with haggard faces. Miguel was dead; Jake apparently so; Jack had a nasty knife wound in the leg which prevented him from standing, and José was spitting blood and so much exhausted that I had to carry him into the inner room, as soon as it was safe to move. The only able-bodied men were myself, Mike Alison, Mr. Gillespie, Mr. Temple, and Mr. Chapin. There was one drop of comfort for us. Our parson was no longer trembling with nervous fear. His face was still pale, but it was firm and hard set; his tall figure was drawn up to its full height; and when we had borne Jake into a place of safety in the girls' room, he grasped Mike's arm, saying quickly, "What shall I do? I cannot shoot, though I am willing to try; tell me what is best."

"You will fight?"

"I should not be fit to live, if I did not—now."

"You're right. Take that axe, then. Is it too heavy? No! Then hold it firmly and use it like a man."

"I understand," was the quiet reply.

Mike smiled: he was now quite his old cool self again, and the contrast between Mr. Chapin's previous sanctimoniousness, with his present warlike attitude and speech, struck his sense of humour keenly. As we hurriedly bore remnants of the barricade into the bed-room, he said to me:

"Parson or no parson, the good old Yankee blood comes out now; they have true grit in them—these New England folk, in spite of their long faces. The Southerners found that out in the war. I'll trust him now. What do you want, Miss Gillespie?" The girl had touched him on the shoulder; she had a rifle in her hand.

"Where shall I stand?" she said briefly.

"Jack is wounded, and it is my turn."

"In that further corner," he answered in the same tone. "We'll receive them there," adding in a grim whisper to me "for the last time, lad. If the boys are not here in ten minutes, they may stay away altogether."

The base of operations was now changed to the north-eastern corner of the girls' bed-room. Here Jake, the Mexican, and my partner were placed with Laura, who was striving to nurse all three at once. Nep stood over Jack, who could still use a rifle, and before them were Mr. Temple and Mr. Gillespie. Mike, Mr. Chapin, and myself now hastily erected a rough barricade before the group with the bedsteads, the arm-chair and a mattress. Over this the men trained their arms, as best they might. By Mike's orders, Mr. Chapin also stood with them, and before the barrier, with a revolver in one hand, and a tomahawk in the other, Mike and I stood to receive the Apaches' charge. We paid no attention to the idiot. He was still crouched in the corner opposite, silent, with livid, ghastly face, his teeth clenched, and a slight froth about his lips, his eyes fixed with glassy, vacant stare upon the door.

There was a stir in the other room. The enemy were creeping on. I felt hot breath upon my cheek.

"Good-bye, lad," Mike whispered between his set teeth, his eyes upon the doorway, "we may meet somewhere again, who knows! Here they come. Steady, all!"

Again the cruel yell; this time with a

triumphant ring, as they saw how few were left. The repeating rifles rang out, and Mike and I emptied our revolvers three times. Then they were upon us, and it was hand to hand. But we were strong and desperate men, fighting for more than life, and for the first minute, fast as they came, they were shot and struck down. Every drop of blood in my body boiled and sang; every muscle stood out like a band of steel. I was severely hacked more than once, and received many a wound; but I felt no pain. The only thought in my mind was how to prevent the Apaches from reaching the group behind the barricade. And back to back with me, felling two men for my one, was Mike Alison. Twice, when a knife was at my throat, and an Indian's hand in my hair, Mike dealt him a deadly blow. His eyes seemed upon me always, and that I ever lived at all through that time is owing solely to him.

But this could not last. In spite of any struggle we could make, though the parson's axe behind us cracked many a skull, and Mr. Temple, Mr. Gillespie, Jack, and Nep, poured an unceasing fire upon the enemy, we were pressed slowly, but surely, back, nearer and nearer to the corner where Laura knelt over the wounded men.

A sickening helplessness began to creep over me as I saw the dense crowd of fierce faces in front, and felt the yielding barrier behind. The struggle was hopeless. I tried desperately to shake off the feeling; but at this moment something struck heavily against me, and I found Mike's face, pale and ghastly, resting on my shoulder. He was severely wounded; yet I had little time to think of him. There had been a slight lull in hostilities the minute before, for no Apache lived who came within reach of Mike's arm. But they rallied as he fell, and we were swept over the barrier in a moment and pinned fast against the wall. I could not move. Part of the barricade had fallen upon me, and I was absolutely powerless. The rush of Indians was now past us towards the corner itself, where Laura now stood unprotected, and foremost of all sprang a tall Indian, wearing the unmistakable lock of dark hair. There was nothing apparently to stop Black Scalp's course, for the other men were held prisoners like myself by the debris of the barricade, and Mr. Chapin, the only one on his feet, was guarding Nep.

We were lost; we were lost indeed!

But then—then—a most wonderful thing

happened. Such a thing I have never heard of before, and never read in any story-book or novel whatsoever.

Black Scalp never reached his goal.

Suddenly—high above the Indian's cry of triumph at Mike's fall—there was heard a most awful and extraordinary sound: the yelling laugh of a maniac.

When the Apaches closed in upon us, Kirk Troy rose from his corner, his face horribly, frightfully distorted, his gibbering idiotcy changed to frenzied madness. He no longer trembled. His great powerful frame was nerved for action; he held out long arms bared, with muscles like strong ropes; his eyes gleaming in the strange light of the one lamp which had not been overturned, and the white moonlight. He stepped forward with swift and steady stride, pushing back the Indians as if they were so many children. As he advanced he laughed aloud—a screeching laugh—and he made straight for the Chief. He was close upon him when Black Scalp sprang forward with the leap of a leopard, and with upraised knife.

Kirk caught the hand that held the knife with his left, and with his right seized the Chief by the long black lock of hair. Then he laughed again. The struggle did not last a moment. He jerked back the Apache's head so violently that his neck must have been dislocated; and then, letting go the lock of hair, he clutched his throat.

We all looked on without moving, and before the rest had time to recover from their amazement, Black Scalp's soul had passed to the happy hunting grounds. Then Kirk Troy hurled the dead body of their Chief among the savages, and followed, whirling his bony arms and striking with Black Scalp's knife. He was in the midst of them fighting as only a madman can, with the strength of insanity.

Indians have a superstitious reverence for madness, and wavered from the moment that Kirk Troy appeared; when their Chief was killed, they gave way right and left, though a few stood bravely out, and the panic once begun, rapidly increased, until the Indians were tearing, hustling, and struggling to get out of the door, faster than they had entered it. In three minutes the room was clear, in another minute there was not a single living Apache in the place. Then back, with staggering step, came poor Kirk Troy. As he crossed the threshold, we could see that he was bleeding profusely, his hand pressed

against his side. He was silent, and I cannot help thinking that in some dim way his senses had returned to him. But this we shall never know, for he had not taken more than two steps into the room before he reeled, and fell. He never rose again.

And what now? In a minute or so the Indians would recover themselves, and then——

No! for there came a steady rumbling sound which made the ground tremble, and our hearts leap up in thankfulness—the thunder of a hundred horses' feet. The boys had come.

Crack! The reports of a hundred rifles rang out like a roll of cannon. A minute later and the place was full of cowboys, while unceasingly outside crashed the repeaters; now far, now near. The revenge party never slept that night; neither did they draw rein nor taste bite or sup all the following day; not a single one of Black Scalp's braves ever reached the reservations.

Nep's prophecy was faithfully fulfilled.

An hour had passed since we heard the tramp of the boys, and knew that we were safe. Our first care was for the wounded men, and, assisted by a number of the boys, we did our best to ease their pain, and discover the extent of their hurts. Among Mike's men was one whom they called Zeph, who had been surgeon's assistant in the Civil War; he it was who examined the wounded—we listened breathlessly to his opinion. Jack's wound, he said, was a mere scratch; Jake, who had now regained consciousness, would soon be right if he were only kept quiet; José, he shook his head over, though saying he would do his best; but, when he came to Mike, he said, quietly:

"He will live about half-an-hour, a few minutes less or more—no longer. You'd better hev him quiet to yourself awhile, for I kin see he wants to speak to ye. Prop him up, so. Now get some brandy. That's all I can do for him."

Mike had now come fully to himself, and was listening with a smile to these candid remarks. I could not speak, but beckoned to Laura, who was attending at the moment to the Sheriff. She brought the brandy and gave it to Mike. Then she knelt down beside the dying man in silence, waiting for him to speak.

"No," he replied, though she had said nothing, "I am in no pain, Laura—no

pain. But I cannot move—I suppose it is the loss of blood."

Presently he began to talk clearly and well, though in a low voice.

"Yes. I have more than one thing to say, and I must be quick about it, as Zeph said. So the boys came in time. Did Juan lose his way? Ah, I thought so. I knew they would not be two hours in riding here. A little more brandy, Laura. So—so—and you never guessed—you never remembered me. Why, I knew you from the first, though you were but a little thing when I saw you last. I knew you partly because you are so like Adelaide—Adelaide"—he repeated this name as if he loved it. "Well, I did not mean you to find it out, and if I had lived you would not. Laura," he paused here for a moment, and then spoke very slowly, "you are so very like your sister Adelaide, so very like Adelaide—when I knew her, and when I loved her."

We both started.

"Do you recognise me now?"

Laura shook her head with a bewildered look.

"No. You were a very little girl—and I am altered—Heaven knows that—altered out of all recognition. Well, then, I am Harold Courtney."

Laura looked intently at the haggard face.

"Oh yes! I see it now," she cried excitedly. "I remember you. When I was a child you often came to see us. You were at Oxford with Tom Copley—Adelaide's husband."

"Yes—and something more than that—but you were very young and didn't know."

"Something more? Oh! Mike—Harold—that we should owe our lives—once—twice to you! Oh! if Adelaide knew!"

He raised his head and spoke fiercely between clenched teeth: "I loved Adelaide, Laura. I loved her before he ever saw her. Why, it was I who introduced him to her first of all. I tell you she should have been my wife." A fit of coughing now came on, and choked him. In a little while he continued quietly:

"We won't say more about it now. It was the old story. I cared for her a long, long while, and I thought she was beginning to return it. Then I spoke, and found that it was too late; she was already privately engaged to—to Tom. Well, I left England before I did any harm, that is

all I can say for myself. I've been what you have heard since. But there's one thing I want you to know—I want you to tell her, Laura. What I've done for you was partly for her sake—not all, for I owed a debt to Harry—but, you were like her. I could not let you be in any danger—for her sake—so I spent my money—hoping that the Apaches would hear of the boys, and leave the settlement alone. And now, there's one thing more. Harry, I said last night that I'd stay to see you married. Will you let me? Will you be married now, so that I may feel quite sure that all is right and safe before I die?"

I stooped and kissed him. I might live a hundred years, but I should never have again such a true and loving friend. Then I looked at Laura, and she rose to speak to Mr. Chapin.

The parson came forward readily; he was bruised and sore, but otherwise little the worse for the fight, though his white tie had been torn from his neck, his black coat was in tatters, and his long, pale face plentifully streaked with blood.

While a few preparations were being made, Mike lay still with closed eyes. But he opened them suddenly, hearing his name pronounced. Jake Blundell was speaking to Mr. Gillespie.

"Tell Mike," he was saying feebly, being very weak and ill, "that before he's clear off the hooks, I'd like to know that he bears no ill-feelin'. I misjudged him very bad. If I were not so sick I'd go to him. Do it for me, will ye?"

Mr. Gillespie crossed over to the dying man.

"Can't you bring him near?" he said faintly, "where I can see him. Then I'll answer him myself."

They moved the Sheriff, and the two men lay side by side. With great difficulty Mike stretched out his hand and laid it upon that of his old enemy. Jake held it close.

"Can ye forgive me, Mike?" he whispered. "As I said a'ready, I were misled, misled from beginnin' to end."

And the other smiled upon him, and tried to return the pressure.

"It's—all right—all right, Jake. You did your best."

His voice was very faint now, though his eyes were bright and clear.

And then the wedding-service was concluded.

Was there ever a stranger, wilder wedding?

A cowboy held the only lamp—the kerosene lamp—that had survived the fight. All round us lay the bodies of the dead and wounded. Here lay José, dying fast; here lay the long limbs of Kirk Troy, stiffened in death; here Jack sat, his leg bandaged; here was Miguel, dead; here the corpse of Black Scalp. The light of the lamp fell upon these witnesses of the marriage. It fell upon the grey eyes and pale face of Mike, who had saved us; it fell upon Nep, her face no longer smiling, but soft and tearful; and fell upon the bride—her white dress torn and stained with blood. And it fell upon the bridegroom—what a bridegroom! My coat hung in strips; my shirt was torn off my arms; a great gash on the left hand gave me only two fingers to hold the ring; and my face was black with powder, and streaked with blood. For spectators we had besides half-a-dozen of Mike's cowboys, their wild faces wearing an expression of unwonted softness, and their voices answering with a deep "Amen" to the simple prayer with which the clergyman concluded the service.

Mike was lying quite still now, a peaceful smile on his face, his hand in Jake Blundell's, his eyes upon Laura.

"Thanks, old lad," he said faintly. "Laura, will you kiss me?" She did so with a sob. "Now, Harry." As my lips touched his, he murmured softly: "Lad, I've paid my debt, at last."

"Oh, Mike!" I cried bitterly. "There must be some hope. You will not die now, after all! I cannot bear it!"

"Hush, Harry. It's—right. I do not wish to live. If I lived I should only be worse than ever, perhaps. I want you to be happy, and you will—you and Laura," his voice had fallen to a whisper, his eyes were getting dim. "Good-bye—dear lad—Laura—you'll—tell—Adelaide."

This was his last word. Slowly the light died out of the big, grey eyes; almost imperceptibly the breathing stopped; his head fell back. Mike Alison was dead.

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CALENDAR FOR 1888.

THE ENVOY'S DAUGHTER.

THE ROMANCE OF A YEAR.

CHAPTER I.

A GIRLS' SCHOOL AT EASTBOURNE—A STOLEN INTERVIEW.

THE autumn term had just commenced, and Miss Goodchild's school at Eastbourne was in all the bustle of constant arrivals. Discipline was as yet hardly established, and the girls darting to and fro filled the house with constant talk and laughter. Effusive greetings, warm embraces, mock quarrels on the staircases and landings—everywhere a joyous clamour—all this showed that the girls were light-spirited and glad to get back again, and Miss Goodchild allowed, and even encouraged the uproar. Her brown, pleasant face beamed a welcome upon all. "Don't pull the house down among you, that's all I ask," she cried to the girls—and then she returned to making up her accounts; a pleasing occupation, for her school was full, and cheques and remittances had been raining down upon her by every post.

"But where is Edith Brook?" said Miss Goodchild, as she locked up her books and papers. "Where is the maid of misrule? How is it that I don't hear her voice above the rest?"

Edith came forward with a blush "I

am here, Miss Goodchild. I did not know that you wanted me to make a noise."

Miss Goodchild regarded Edith critically. The girl was under her special charge, for she had no mother, and her father had been long abroad at his diplomatic post in the East. Decidedly something was changed in the girl. She looked happy enough; too happy, indeed, thought Miss Goodchild. There was a glow in her face, and a soft light in her eyes, which the sage schoolmistress could attribute only to one cause. "Decidedly Edith has got a lover," said Miss Goodchild to herself. "Well, and why not? She is past seventeen, and if somebody does not fall in love with her, somebody must be blind, that's all. Only I am glad he is not at Eastbourne. Well, I shall write to Sir Athelstan, and tell him that his daughter ought to come out into the world."

Miss Goodchild's self-congratulations that the young man was not at Eastbourne were perhaps a little premature. He was not there at this present time, indeed. But would he come? Edith thought so, at all events, and imparted her opinion to her great friend and room-mate: "If only the wind holds fair, the wind from the west, he said he could be here in forty-eight hours, and forty-seven are passed already."

But that night Miss Goodchild might sleep in peace, for there was no sign of the lover. Yet she marked how anxious Edith

was as to the state of the wind, and how she held up her pretty brown hand—browned by sun and winds, for the arm it belonged to was fair and white as ivory—held up her hand to the flaws of wind as if to gauge its power.

"Have you any friends at sea, Edith, that you are so anxious about the wind?" asked Miss Goodchild calmly.

And Edith blushed vividly again as she answered: "Oh, nobody in particular."

"Clearly her somebody is a sailor," reasoned Miss Goodchild; "some naval hero from the Channel Fleet she met down in the West. How lucky we have not a port at Eastbourne!"

Early next morning the two girls were astir even before the school-bell rang. Their room was high up, and commanded a view of the sea, which stretched dimpling below on this bright autumn morning, with light mists curling upon its surface. A small yacht was in the field of view running before the soft breeze, with her sails bellying out and every stitch of canvas set, sky-scrapers, moon-rakers, and if there be any taller canvas than these, there it was. "It would be too wonderful if it were really his boat," said Edith, tremblingly adjusting the field-glass. And then the yacht shook down her sails, and anchored in the roadstead.

"It surely is—it is his boat—the 'Unknown.' It is too bad of him. I shall get into an awful row, and it will be all his fault."

The situation, indeed, was perplexing. Miss Goodchild had a searching eye, and although she allowed a good deal of liberty to the elder girls, they went about under a tacit parole. And yet when somebody had sailed unknown distances to see her, how cruel it would be to disappoint him! "You must help me, Floy," said Edith; "you must go with me till we come in sight of him, and then we must contrive to lose each other. But see him I must."

See him she did. It was on the sea-shore they met; the tide had run out, and wet, glittering sands stretched on either hand. The sea murmured in the distance, and a soft medley of sounds came from the distant town. On the wide expanse of sand two figures were prominent. Here was a girl, whose slight, graceful contours were outlined by the breeze, in the clinging folds of her light summer garments; there, a young man bronzed and sturdy, in sea-going costume; the here and there being no further apart than two cherries on a stalk, till

some jarring element in their talk drove them asunder. Then the girl turned away with an offended air.

"If you are so cross," she said, raising her voice from its dulcet undertone, "I shall go. Good-bye, Mr. Railton."

"Cross! I am not cross," cried the youth indignantly—"at least not with you, Edith; it is my own people I am angry with. But go, if you like; go, and leave me to my misery."

"You are not very miserable, are you?" asked Edith wistfully. "You don't seem to be miserable. You go sailing about here and there, just where you like. Oh, Harry, I wish the tables were turned, and I could roam about here and there, and make love to anybody I met, and that you were stuck at a schoolroom window looking at a high wall, and sighing, 'When will he come?'"

"Is that what you do?" questioned the young man tenderly. "My poor darling, it is hard for you. Let us run away together, Edith!"

Edith shook her head. "That would hurt poor papa, and he is so kind. He will be home soon, and I will tell him all about you, and then I know he will ask you to Vanyards."

Harry shook his head in turn. "There is something in the way. My father is all right, but my mother will not listen to me, and she commands the ship. When I told her your name and all about you, there was a row if you like. There is an old feud between our people, it seems—the Montague and Capulet business."

"Then we young people might make it up in the Shakespearean fashion," suggested Edith with a half-smile.

"Let us begin now," cried Harry, planning something in the way of an embrace; but Edith eluded his grasp and stood before him, half-laughing, half-defiant.

"There is some one coming," she said, increasing the distance between them. For her quick ear had detected the approach of a footstep over the sands. The new-comer had appeared quite suddenly from under the shadow of the cliff—a stout negro gentleman, who looked terribly black and shiny against the glimmer of the white chalk. His attire, too, was of the glossiest and deepest black, relieved only by a white neck-cloth of the amplest dimensions.

"Your pardon, kind friends," said the dark man, in a rich, unctuous voice, in which there was the suspicion of a transatlantic twang. "Can you indicate the correct track for the town of Eastbourne?"

"Straight away, right before you," replied the young man curtly, annoyed at the interruption.

"Thank you so much," said the negro effusively. "Will you afford me the pleasure of presenting you with a leaflet?" proffering a paper that had the appearance of a tract. Young Railton kept his hands in his jacket pocket, but Edith took the offered leaflet, acknowledging the gift with a pleasant smile.

"Bless you, my child," said the negro gentleman, with fervour. He walked on, but not far, for presently he sat down on an old boat, and taking out of his pocket a crimson silk handkerchief, began to polish his already glistening face.

"Are you in the right path, young friend?" read Edith from the leaflet. "Oh, Harry, this is too appropriate. I don't think I am, I ought to be at the library changing Miss Goodchild's books; and really I can't stay any longer."

"Just five minutes more," urged Harry. "Edith, I have so many things to say."

"Well, five minutes then," yielded Edith. But at that moment a voice was heard, as if from some cranny in the cliffs: "Edith! Edith! Where is my daughter?"

"That is papa's voice," said Edith, turning pale. "Harry, I must run; I must fly."

"Darling, don't go," entreated Harry; "your father is thousands of miles away."

But Edith was already half across the sands. Harry had heard the voice, too, and was all the more uneasy, that there was nothing to account for it. The negro gentleman was the only person in sight, and he was sitting, still polishing his forehead, and quite in another direction from that whence the sound had proceeded.

Harry peered here and there, his eyes dazzled by the white glare of the sunshine on the chalk cliffs; and pursuing his way along the beach, he came to a shadowy recess, where a lady photographer had established her camera. The wandering voice could hardly have proceeded from that quarter, and yet it would be well to resolve the doubt. As Harry approached, the photographist held up a warning hand.

"One moment; don't trespass upon my field, if you please!"

The voice was clear, resonant, and pleasant. The speaker was not exactly young, but her dark, finely outlined face was still handsome, with a certain *beauté de diable* that had its attractions. She stood intently regarding sea and sky, with one hand upon the slide

of her camera, and the other lifted still in warning; presently she drew away a morsel of card that supported the sliding shutter, as one draws a trigger; there was a sharp click, the tension of the lady's figure ceased, and she turned round upon Harry with a smile that had something doubtful in its frankness.

"It was only a field of vision that I warned you off—but we others have our rights, if we are not exactly proprietors."

Harry muttered awkwardly that he should have been sorry to have spoilt her picture. He had intruded, thinking that he heard a voice.

"I too heard a voice," interrupted the other quickly. "But it did not frighten me as it frightened your fair companion. Ah, what a charming group you made! I longed to add you to my portfolio." This with a little laugh that had the smallest amount of mirth in it possible. "Now wouldn't you be surprised to hear," continued the woman with some malice, "that I know all about you and your fair friend? You, no one could mistake, from your ridiculous likeness to your father."

"You know my father, then?" exclaimed Harry in some surprise.

"Is he not my banker?" replied the woman. "Does he not cash my drafts, even when my poor little account is overdrawn? Oh, yes, I knew your papa when he was not quite so—goodie as he is just now."

"Did you?" said Harry, interested in spite of himself, for his father's strictness of bearing had often excited his curiosity; it seemed out of character with his temperament. "You knew the governor when he used to kick up his heels a bit, eh?"

"What I know, I know," said the woman sagely. "But you can tell him when you see him, that you met his old friend Mrs. Barrington at Eastbourne. Now I must pack up, for I am going to take some views elsewhere."

CHAPTER II. THE ENVOY'S ARRIVAL.

By this time Edith had reached the precincts of the school; and here she was startled by an unusual air of confusion and agitation which pervaded the establishment. The usual sounds were there: the virgins and their scales were audible in the notes of two or three well-thrummed pianos; there was a murmur of verbs and adjectives from the French class; and from an open window could be heard the English teacher's somewhat tired voice descending on King

John and Magna Charta. But altogether unusual and portentous was the violent ringing of the drawing-room bell, and the scurry of maids to and fro, while Miss Goodchild herself could be seen on the steps leading to the kitchen, giving contradictory orders in an agitated manner.

"Oh, here you are, Edith Brook," cried Miss Goodchild, as our heroine made her appearance. "Where have you been? We have sent to the library, all over the town—but no explanations now. Follow me; your father has arrived, and is raging in the drawing-room because you were not produced on the instant."

Here was an escape for poor Edith! But, had she really heard her father's voice upon the beach, or had some supernatural power intervened? It must have been a kind one, to save her from disgrace.

Miss Goodchild threw open the drawing-room door, and marched in with all the dignity she could assume at such short notice, holding Edith by the arm.

"Really, Sir Athelstan," she began, when the ringing suddenly ceased, and she was confronted by a pleasant-looking man of the world, a man lean, and bronzed, and wiry, with a pleasant, well-worn face.

"My dear Miss Goodchild," said Sir Athelstan, with a courtly bow, "I must apologise for my hasty behaviour; but really your servants have kept me waiting such an unreasonable time, that I grew slightly impatient."

"Sir Athelstan," said Miss Goodchild firmly, "it is a maxim in this house that no young lady shall be interrupted in her studies. Even Royalty would not put us out of our usual course. But here is your daughter, here is Edith, and, I venture to say, all that the fondest parent could desire."

Miss Goodchild retired with a slightly offended air, and left father and daughter together. Sir Athelstan held his daughter at arm's length for a few moments, as he seemed to read her blushing face with eager scrutiny.

"Yes; you are like your poor mother," kissing her on either cheek, "and as handsome, I dare say, though not to me—no, never to me. Now, my girl, how soon can you start for home?"

"For home?" echoed Edith, hardly knowing what the word implied.

"Yes; for Vanyards, child. There will be home there at last. I have a whole year's holiday, and I look to you to make me happy for that time. I am going to make the acquaintance of my native land.

Come, child, we start in half-an-hour. Run and pack your boxes;—or stay, you will want a maid—ask Miss Goodchild to provide you with a maid, and anything else you may want for a short tour."

Sir Athelstan Brook was a diplomatist, and yet at heart he was a simple-minded man, who would have loved nothing better—at least, so he thought—than a quiet country home, and the placid enjoyments of domestic life. Such a lot had been hitherto denied him; but now it seemed within his reach, at least for a single year. His boyhood's home at Vanyards, that dear old place in the most luxurious nook of the very garden of England, which had been let furnished to different tenants for the last dozen years, was now vacant. He had just telegraphed for his sister Zoe—known to Edith as Aunt Zoo—to leave her Devonshire cottage forthwith, and join him at Vanyards. His daughter, who had shot up into a young woman since he last had seen her, a tiny thing in frocks and long stockings—his daughter would be a charming companion; to watch the unfolding of a fresh, ingenuous nature, the most delightful of occupations. There would be lovers, perhaps, to spoil the charm; but these could be postponed, at all events, to the end of his year of freedom.

When he told Edith to be ready in half-an-hour to accompany him on a driving-tour to her future home in Kent, Sir Athelstan possessed only a walking-stick in the way of vehicular appliances. But that walking-stick had capabilities like the pumpkin of the fairy godmother. In a quarter of an hour Sir Athelstan had bought a pair of horses and a mail Phaeton, and had made a very good bargain, too; in another five minutes he had engaged a groom; at the exact time appointed, a handsome equipage stood at the door of Miss Goodchild's school.

On her part, Miss Goodchild had performed wonders. Edith was not exactly ready—that would have been to expect miracles—but she was likely to be ready soon.

"My dear Edith," Miss Goodchild had exclaimed, "if I do not get rid of you and your masterful father at the time appointed, the whole discipline of the school will be destroyed. Run and make your adieux to your school-fellows, and trust me for all the rest."

Thus the maid was ready—a pretty little Sussex maid, with blue eyes and freckles; Edith's trunks were ready; but Edith herself, where was she! Weeping, alas! and

surrounded by her companions, who vainly were trying to remove the traces of tears that at every fresh trial gushed forth anew.

When Sir Athelstan saw his daughter's tearful face he realised for the first time, with some compunction, that the girl had formed ties and affections of her own; and that to leave a place where you have spent half your life at half-an-hour's notice is something of a trial.

"We can't help it, my dear child," said Sir Athelstan soothingly. "There are the different stages of life, and we leave behind us all we like best as we pass along."

There is no comfort, however, in your philosophy; only when the heart itself is dried up can it take to such arid food. It was more to the purpose when her father bade Edith jump down, and run in and ask all the girls she liked best to come and see her at Vanyards as soon as the holidays began.

Before leaving the town, Sir Athelstan drove round to the hotel where he had breakfasted, to pick up his portmanteau and his faithful servant, Robinson. Robinson was to take Miss Brook's baggage—for it is not to be supposed that all a young lady's trunks and baskets could be carried on a mail Phaeton—and he was to go by rail to Vanyards, and prepare everything for its owner's reception. But Robinson was nowhere to be found. Sir Athelstan created almost as much disturbance at the hotel as he had done at Miss Goodchild's; but no Robinson rewarded his pains. At last, however, a little fisher-boy appeared, enquiring for "Sir Somebody Something—a great gentleman from furren parts." He was brought to Sir Athelstan, and proved to be the bearer of a missive in the form of a piece of board, the relic, no doubt, of some stranded ship, on which was roughly chalked: "R. detained—route wanted."

"Please, sir, you was to put down where you was a-going," said the sailor-boy, proffering a scrap of chalk.

"That is Robinson all over," said Sir Athelstan testily; "never has a pencil and morsel of paper. However, we must humour him, I suppose." And he wrote on the reverse side of the board: "Hastings, Rye, Folkestone, home!"

CHAPTER III. THE PLOT AT PEVENSEY.

ROBINSON was something more than a faithful servant, as will be seen in the course of this narrative. Had Sir Athelstan been asked the reason of his sudden return, he

would have alluded to a certain disagreement with the home Government, which, connected with a longing for repose, led him to resign his mission. Robinson knew better; he had arranged the matter, thinking it a shame that Sir Athelstan should spend his time in the prattle-prattles of diplomacy when his own affairs required attention, and especially while his daughter, who ought by this time to have been taking her place in society, and making the acquaintance of her friends at home and abroad, was mewed up in school.

Just before the Envoy's departure, however, a discovery was made which had shaken Sir Athelstan's confidence in his servant, and which promised to lead to further complications. The very despatches which had been the moving cause of Sir Athelstan's retirement, as containing instructions of which he altogether disapproved; these despatches were missing, had probably been abstracted from sinister motives. These despatches, in the hands of a foreign administration, might cause grave complications, might involve the fate of Governments, and even the chances of war. Only Robinson could have had access to the keys of Sir Athelstan's jealously guarded despatch-box. They might have been for a few moments in the hands of Mr. Barrington, Sir Athelstan's private secretary.

The Envoy was far too wary to make a fuss about the missing despatches. He only acquainted Mr. Barrington and Robinson with his loss, and remarked that he would give a good deal to get his despatches back again.

Barrington at once suggested a possible chance. A young Greek had been for some time employed by Sir Athelstan to copy and translate for him. The Greek had suddenly disappeared. Report said he had gone to Constantinople, having made some great coup. Barrington proposed to follow him, and obtain his secret by fair means or by foul.

Sir Athelstan acquiesced, and Barrington departed on his mission, while the Envoy started for home. Half-a-dozen newspaper correspondents were awaiting him at Boulogne and Folkestone, by which route he was expected to arrive. Robinson brought his master round by Dieppe and Newhaven, and thence to Miss Goodchild's school at Eastbourne.

One of the first people Robinson saw after arriving at Eastbourne, was Mrs. Barrington, the mother of the Envoy's private secretary, and the stepsister of the Envoy's late wife. Mrs. Barrington was thus titularly Edith's aunt, and there would

have been nothing extraordinary in her coming to visit Edith, but that such intercourse was prohibited; not to Edith, but to Mrs. Barrington. The latter enjoyed a certain yearly allowance from Sir Athelstan, and one of the conditions attaching to it was, that she should not communicate with the Envoy's daughter.

Whatever business Mrs. Barrington might have at Eastbourne, Robinson was certain that she was after no good, and he determined to keep an eye upon her. On the other hand, if Mrs. Barrington recognised Sir Athelstan's man, she would certainly keep an eye upon him, and how keen that watch could be Robinson knew of old. But he was an adept in making-up; that had been part of his early training. He could mould his face in a moment into the recognised negro physiognomy—the thick, hanging lip, the fleshy nose, the expression of stolid self-satisfaction were all at his command, and he possessed a stain of his own invention which gave his skin the exact tint desired.

The negro gentleman distributing leaflets was thus Mr. Robinson himself. Unexpectedly he assisted at the interview between Edith and young Railton. At this he smiled not unkindly. While awaiting Mrs. Barrington's further movements, Robinson sent his message to Sir Athelstan. When the messenger returned, Mrs. Barrington was still engaged in packing up her photographic apparatus, while young Railton strolled along the beach in the direction of the pier, where the dingy from his little yacht was in waiting. Robinson noted the look of dejection on the young man's face, and sympathised. He should not lose sight of his sweetheart if he, Robinson, could help it. He carefully obliterated his own message at the back of the board, and accosted young Railton, who had passed him unheeding.

"This for gentleman on the beach, from Missie in carriage," he said; "little boy give it me. I do not know what it is; perhaps for you other gentleman."

Mr. Railton evidently knew what it was, or thought he did, for he bounded away with a quite altered aspect.

Presently Mrs. Barrington appeared from her temporary studio under the cliffs, and walked in the direction of the town. A shock-headed Sussex youth followed her with the photographic apparatus.

"Which is the way to the station, my lad?" asked Robinson of the youth.

"She's going there," said the boy con-

cisely, indicating his patroness with his thumb.

"Oh, she's going there," echoed the negro gentleman. "Well, you've a pretty good load, sonnie; suppose I give you a lift."

The youth grinned as the negro shouldered the camera. Mrs. Barrington had noticed the transfer, and called out:

"I have made my arrangements with that boy, and shall pay nothing extra."

"I don't want pay, my lady," said the negro, ranging up to his quarry. "I go about doing good to the best of my ability. If you will accept of one or two of these leaflets, I shall be amply repaid for the very small services I may be able to render."

Mrs. Barrington smiled as she took the tracts, but assailed her new companion with a shower of questions: Why did he distribute these things? Who paid him? And, finally, a more difficult question to answer: "Where are you going now?"

"I am going," said the negro solemnly, "where I can find the most bad people."

Mrs. Barrington laughed in her hard, metallic way. "Then you had better come with me," she said, "and you will have a promising subject to commence with. I am going to Pevensey Castle to photograph the ruins, and I dare say there will be a few more on the spot who are no better than I am."

This was exactly the opportunity that Robinson had been manœuvring for. Mrs. Barrington was very close-fisted as he knew of old, and the chance of getting somebody to wait upon her who required no pay and would defray his own expenses, was sure to tempt her. Robinson made himself very useful, got Mrs. Barrington's ticket, and seated himself in an adjoining compartment.

Presently looming over the green flats of Pevensey level appeared the ancient stronghold, looking strangely uncanny in this quiet corner of a quiet, lonely coast, with only the wide sands and green marshes to keep guard over. And yet within the circuit of these ancient walls was once a populous town, with shops, bazaars, market-places, and temples. All this disappeared in smoke and flame. Here was the story of Troy over again, massacre thorough and complete, infants torn from their mothers' breasts and dashed ruthlessly against the stones, the husband slaughtered before the eyes of the wife, the veteran immolated on the pale corpses of his brave sons; hideous cruelty and rapine triumphing over the humble civic virtues of the little com-

munity. All this done by the blue-eyed, fair-haired ancestors of the little shock-headed Sussex lad, who is, perhaps, in his narrow life, expiating the crimes of his forefathers. Of the history of old Anderrida, Robinson knew not a jot; the walls might have been built by the giants, for anything he knew or cared, but he felt a chilly, uncanny influence about the place as he entered the enclosure and looked about him in wonder, so solid and massy seemed the old Roman walls, and so stern and forbidding the ruined Norman towers, that were built to be a yoke upon the shoulders of those whose forefathers had stormed the old city.

Robinson pitched Mrs. Barrington's camera in an advantageous position for focussing a picture of the feudal castle, showing the broken Roman wall beyond; and then he made a round of the sprinkling of visitors, to whom he courteously offered his tracts. But he kept an eye on Mrs. Barrington, and observed that with all excellent opportunities, she had not yet begun operations. The light was good, the sun tempered by clouds, the breeze cool and refreshing, the shadows on the old keep brought out its picturesque outlines; still the photographist remained passive, seated on a fragment of ruin, her hands folded before her, watching and waiting.

The whistle of a train approaching from the direction of Hastings appeared to arouse Mrs. Barrington. She began to arrange her materials—seemed to be focussing her subject, but she had not withdrawn the cap from the camera. "She is expecting somebody," concluded Robinson, and he clambered with some difficulty to a point on the outer walls which commanded a view of the path from the station. A young man was coming at a brisk pace towards the castle. Robinson levelled his field-glass—yes, it was Mr. Edgar Barrington, who was supposed to be at Constantinople, but who was evidently hastening to keep an appointment with his mother. A very innocent assignation, surely. Perhaps it was not so innocent as it looked.

Whatever the character of the approaching interview, Robinson determined to make one of the party. He clambered down from the wall, and keeping out of sight of Mrs. Barrington, he established himself in a nook of the castle ruins, where a broken loophole afforded a view of the little plateau where Mrs. Barrington had planted her apparatus. He could see perfectly, but his

position left something to be desired in the way of hearing.

The greeting of mother and son was courteous, but not affectionate. It was evident that no sentiment of filial devotion had brought the young man to the spot. Edgar produced some official-looking papers, which Mrs. Barrington carefully placed in a case with some photographic plates. These were exposed to the light, and, watch in hand, Mrs. Barrington walked slowly up and down conversing with her son. Snatches only of the conversation reached Mr. Robinson as the pair approached and receded from his position—such snatches as these:

"In restoring these papers you will place Sir Athelstan under an obligation. Edith is young, inexperienced, frivolous. It will be your own fault if you do not succeed with her. I assure you her *état* is a splendid one, and quite independent of her father. There is already a pretendant whom you know. You might make use of this stolen interview as a lever to move Sir Athelstan. Hasten to Vanyards; make friends with this aunt, who is an old fool."

To all this, young Edgar listened attentively but impatiently.

"I see the whole situation, mother," he cried at last, coming to a stand just under Robinson's hiding-place. "As for the girl, leave her to me. *Ça me connaît*. But about the ready money—is that secure?"

"Perfectly," replied Mrs. Barrington. "For these plates I am promised a thousand pounds. I know my men, and they are of the very highest diplomacy. To-night I shall be in Paris, to-morrow I shall touch the money; the next day Europe will ring with the perfidy of the British Government, all the official newspapers will contain full text of their despatches, and behold the K.C.B. '*crevé*.' Then we share."

"You are a woman of resource, I admit," said Edgar in a tone of admiration; "but don't burn your cakes, like the man in the fable."

"It was a woman, and she broke her eggs," said Mrs. Barrington gaily. "Mine are just '*cuits*.' Away with you! To Vanyards and make Aunt Zoe your slave, and leave me to look after my plates."

Then Mrs. Barrington went back to her frame, took out the plates, and examined them under the hood of the camera. Then she handed back the official-looking papers to her son, who placed them in his bag, and hurried away to the station. Mrs.

Barrington, her work completed, shut up her plates in a little mahogany case, which she placed carefully on one side. Then she sat down with a satisfied air, and drew from a pocket, concealed in her panier, a small silver-plated revolver, which she examined to assure herself of its being in working order.

Robinson felt an aguish qualm at the sight; he began to think that Mrs. Barrington would be a difficult person to deal with. Certainly he might follow Sir Athelstan, and acquaint him with what he had seen and heard; but by that time Mrs. Barrington would be halfway to Paris, and, even if he were believed, he might get small credit for a revelation which would come a day after the fair. He crept down from his ambuscade, and began to distribute leaflets vigorously among some visitors who had just arrived, as a means of collecting his thoughts. Presently he worked round to where Mrs. Barrington was still sitting; she called him to her.

"You will carry my things to the station, will you not?" she said. "You have done enough for Pevensy; why, your leaflets are blowing about all over the place. But you are hungry, perhaps; well, so am I. Here, I have a packet of sandwiches; take half of them, and sit down over there and eat them." Robinson took the packet of sandwiches surlily enough, and sat down in his corner. Mrs. Barrington kept the little mahogany case containing the photographic plates carefully by her side. Robinson also caught a glimpse of the glittering silver-mounted weapon, which had caused him so much uneasiness. He looked ruefully at his sandwiches.

"Can't you eat them, my man?" asked Mrs. Barrington, who was already half through her share. The negro gentleman shook his head, but made no reply. But a voice which seemed to come from the shattered loophole whispered sharply in Mrs. Barrington's ear:

"Perhaps he thinks you have poisoned them, Sybil."

The effect of the suggestion upon Mrs. Barrington was wonderful. She turned yellow with fear and rage.

"Did you hear that?" she cried to the negro.

"Surely, madam, from that hole in the wall."

Mrs. Barrington dashed hastily across the sward, as if to intercept some one lurking behind the wall. For a moment she was out of sight of her belongings, and in

that moment Robinson sprang to the mahogany case, turned out the plates, rubbed off the photographic film with a handkerchief dipped in acid, and replaced the now useless plates in their case. When Mrs. Barrington appeared once more, he was sitting in his corner quietly munching his sandwiches.

"I wish I could think it was a voice from the other world," muttered Mrs. Barrington, as she returned from her unsuccessful search; "I don't fear revenants, it is the living hand I dread." The woman was strangely shaken and troubled, but still resolute to carry out her plans.

Soon after, Mrs. Barrington was on her way across the Channel, while Robinson dutifully returned to his master's service. He made up his mind to keep his own counsel strictly as to what had occurred that day. That Mrs. Barrington would rage like a tigress, when she found she had been outwitted, was pretty evident. Also that it would be bad for any one whom she should discover to have tricked her. And the only sure way to avoid such a discovery, was to keep the affair entirely to himself.

CHAPTER IV. TO THE OLD HOME IN KENT. HURSTMONCEUX—BATTLE—BYE.

As Eastbourne was left behind, with its white terraces and broad esplanades, with the flashing sea, all dotted with craft, here the trim yacht, there the long, black steamer, while far away like a vision, distant sails seemed to glimmer in the clouds; as they passed from the glitter of the sea to the quiet of the country, Edith began to recover her spirits and to look about her with cheerful eyes. The way was a pleasant one, through the stately shades of Hurstmonceux, where an hour was spent about the ruined walls of the grand old mansion of the Dacres; and then through a quiet, peaceful country, with here and there a commanding brow, where the sea far-stretching was in view, with the blink about it of an old friend. Then they came to Battle, with its Abbey, as little like an abbey as may be, but where the field of the great battle lies pretty much as when the sorrowful day of slaughter dawned on the English and Norman hosts. And then there was the cheerful descent into Hastings town, where the sea lies so snugly beneath the old High Street and the sturdy church, and where the lights were twinkling so cheerily far and near. To see the fresh

curl of the billows, and the fishing-boats stealing in one after another in the gloaming, with all the stir of hauling up the boats, and the chatter and greetings of fishermen and fisherwives, was worth a longer journey than our friends had taken that day.

The day had been a pleasant one. Sir Athelstan was an excellent companion; his easy good-nature seemed to invite his daughter's confidence, and, indeed, gained it to a certain extent; but what had seemed so easy at a distance, proved quite impossible at close quarters. No, she could not bring herself to pronounce the name of Henry Railton. And she did not know whether she was delighted or horrified when, as she walked towards the pier with her father after dinner, she saw the young man himself; he had evidently just landed from his yacht, and his being there must have been surely an accident, for how could he know what route they had taken, even if he had heard of her departure? But Harry did not appear astounded at the meeting. He took off his hat with great emprossement, and it appeared as if he meant to introduce himself to Sir Athelstan, but Edith frowned him back. Such an introduction would be terribly inopportune. As for Sir Athelstan, he acknowledged the greeting mechanically; he was used to greetings from every quarter and at all times, and thought no more about the matter. Presently they sat down on one of the seats on the Esplanade, and Sir Athelstan lighted his after-dinner cigar.

"Ten days after my foot touches English ground," said Sir Athelstan gaily, "a beneficent Administration cuts off my pay. From that moment I am free from official trammels. I can speculate on the Stock Exchange, I can write to the newspapers, I can indulge in any form of mild dissipation. Don't be uneasy, Edith, I shall spend my holiday very quietly. I shall enjoy most seeing you happy and jolly. Let us see. First of September, partridge shooting begins, as the almanacks say. I suppose there are partridges at Vanyards; Robinson knows. How I miss the rascal! But you did not learn shooting at school, and unless you have a decided taste that way, don't begin. Still, we might have some young fellows down to make the old place lively. Now, is there any one you would particularly like to be asked?"

Sir Athelstan spoke in a light and laughing tone, but Edith took the matter seriously. She coloured up to the eyebrows as she said earnestly: "Oh, if you would only ask Harry

Railton, dear papa!" and then she stopped, frightened at her own boldness.

Sir Athelstan started violently, and turned upon his daughter a searching glance. "Harry Railton!" he repeated, in a tone of deep displeasure. "Pray, how come you to know such a person, and to speak of him so familiarly?"

"I met him in Devonshire," said Edith hesitatingly, "at Aunt Zoo's in the holidays. He had such a pretty little yacht lying in the bay, and he used to come ashore."

"Oh, he used to come ashore," repeated Sir Athelstan doubtfully; "well, and then?"

"And then when I went back to Miss Goodchild's, he happened to come to Eastbourne."

"A curious coincidence," said Sir Athelstan drily. "But surely Miss Goodchild did not permit him to visit you?"

"Oh, no, papa. Only we happened to meet on the beach once or twice."

Sir Athelstan here uttered some favourite malediction under his breath. But he saw at once that it would be unwise to make a fuss about the affair. Edith had spoken of the young man frankly enough, and that was reassuring. Figuring in the light of a stern parent, Sir Athelstan would fail to win his daughter's confidence. "I am glad you told me, Edith," he said kindly. "I fancy he is a son of a once friend of mine, who acted a traitor part by me; if so, it is impossible that there should be any friendly relations between my family and his."

"But he is so anxious to be friends with us," urged Edith eagerly. "I am sure if you saw him, and I think he is here to-night—I—I fancy we met him just now—would you not like to see him?"

Sir Athelstan frowned. "Doesn't it strike you, Edith, as rather impertinent in the young man to follow us? Consider, Edith, that you are my daughter; and, if that were not enough, you are your mother's daughter. Your mother, Edith, was a Princess in Sicily, but she preferred the title of my wife. Still, there are conveniences, and a girl who inherits an illustrious name and a noble fortune, is not to be followed about and ogled by the first young man she meets."

Edith was distressed, and yet interested in spite of her vexation. "But, father," she said, "you have never before spoken to me about my mother, or the fortune I am to inherit."

"My dear," said Sir Athelstan, "when you were a little chit of a girl, it was best you should not be made stuck-up by hearing of such things. Now, you are almost

grown-up, and you should know all about your real position—if for no other reason, to put you on your guard against fortune-hunters, who are sure to follow you.”

“I am sure Mr. Railton knew no more than I,” urged Edith.

“Did he not?” said Sir Athelstan sceptically. “Then he can’t have mentioned you to his parents, who are well acquainted with the circumstances. But as matters stand, it is necessary that I should see this young gentleman.”

“Oh, papa,” cried Edith, quite overwhelmed, “you won’t say anything harsh to him?”

“Not I,” said Sir Athelstan, “I shall only ask him a question or two—but where to find him? Robinson would find him at once. I am quite lost without him.”

“I have just arrived, Sir Athelstan,” said Robinson’s quiet voice, close at hand. “I thought you would want me.”

Robinson knew at once where to find Mr. Railton, and presently introduced him to Sir Athelstan at the hotel. Harry was agitated, but quite coherent. He loved Miss Brook, and was only too glad of the opportunity to declare his purpose to her father.

Sir Athelstan listened in silence. “You are not an only son, I think,” he said at last.

Harry hastened to explain that he had two brothers—Ned, who was to take a share in managing the bank; Jem, who was in command of a gunboat in the Mediterranean. But as far as that went, he expected they would all share alike in the paternal and maternal inheritance. At present, however, Harry admitted that, while he had an ample allowance, he had nothing exactly of his own.

“That being the case,” Sir Athelstan remarked, “a necessary preliminary to any advances on your part, is the signification of the good-will of your parents in the matter. Convince me of that,” said Sir Athelstan, rising, and shaking hands with his visitor, “and I shall let my daughter decide for herself. Till then, I trust, as a man of honour, you will seek no surreptitious interviews.”

“I am no match for the diplomatist,” said Harry to himself, as he gave the desired pledge. “But I may see her once more, Sir Athelstan,” he pleaded, “just to explain everything to her?”

“My daughter is sitting there with her maid,” said Sir Athelstan, pointing to the verandah in front of the hotel. “Tell her, please, that I will rejoin her in five minutes.”

“Darling, I am here,” said a voice behind Edith’s chair, as she sat watching the waves as they broke in long lines sparkling with phosphorescent light in the soft gloom of the summer’s night.

“Oh, Harry,” she cried, “do you mean to say that things have gone as smoothly as that?”

The “that” to which Edith alluded was perhaps a kiss which the young man contrived to snatch under cover of darkness. But Harry had to confess that things had gone altogether too smoothly. If Sir Athelstan had been violent and unreasonable, there would have been some excuse for circumventing him. But he had been so kind and agreeable, and Harry was constrained to own that his conditions were altogether right and proper. Only they sundered the pair as completely as iron doors and bars could have done. For Harry was sure in his heart that he could never shake his mother’s resolution. “I had rather see you in your grave, Harry, than married to Agatha Brook’s daughter.” Those had been her last words to Harry, which, naturally enough, he did not repeat to Edith. To her, he made light of the difficulties; all would come right. In a very short time he would be back again with full powers and rights as an accepted lover. But as he snatched another hasty kiss, he felt as if it were only to seal their parting.

An early start was made from Hastings next morning, and the road taken that leads to the top of Fairlight Down, with its extensive views—on one hand, of the sea, with tracks of emerald green, like rivers meandering through streaked plains of sapphire blue—the lovely, home-like sea of the Channel, flecked with white sails, and dotted with steamers hurrying to and from that fair land of France, that lies like a cloud on the horizon. On the other hand, the soft woods and wide pastures of the ancient forest, with white patches of corn-land and the varied hues of cultivated fields. And so through Guestling to Icklesham, where Rye is seen standing on its mount, like some town of the Middle Ages, clustered about church and market-place, with battlemented walls looking over to the sea, where the haven winds through the green marshes, and far away ranges of white cliffs and glittering, wave-washed coasts, even as far as the high towers of Dover’s castled pride.

Here and there was an old timbered house, wrapped in deep, sequestered shade; or a warm-looking red-brick mansion, with sunny lawns, and rich glades, and avenues

of ancient elm; or beech-groves, where the fair white limbs of the trees, half-veiled in the soft green, suggested visions of wood-nymphs and the coy, retiring hamadryads—suggested them, at least, to Sir Athelstan, who had a warm and classic fancy.

"But you seem to like the sea best, Edith, and the ships," said Sir Athelstan, noticing that when a patch of it was visible Edith's attention was at once aroused, and that she scanned it eagerly with the glasses.

Edith blushed, for her interest was concentrated on one particular sail.

This ship to all the rest did she prefer,

a little craft, that veered to and fro with the gentle breeze, distinguished from all the rest, inasmuch as instead of ensign she bore at her masthead a strip of board, that all the coastguardsmen levelled their glasses at, thinking that this might be a smuggler's signal to friends on shore—a guess which was not so far from the truth, either.

Presently the travellers drove through the dead and buried town of Winchelsea, where the wharves, warehouses, and dwellings of a flourishing mediæval town have given place to fields, and copses, and pleasant terraced gardens, with only the old town gaol left as a monument of past civilisation. And under Winchelsea Gate they drove, that had of old time echoed to the shouts of Frenchmen and townsmen in fierce hand-to-hand fight; and presently rattled over the stones of the quaint old High Street of Rye.

Solemnly quiet was the old-world town in the stillness of the summer afternoon—a trifle dull, perhaps; and as a drizzling rain began to fall, the prospect of a long evening to be spent in the best inn's best room, became somewhat appalling.

"Edith," cried Sir Athelstan, after a brief survey of his surroundings, "we will avail ourselves of the resources of civilisation, and take the next train to home."

CHAPTER V. THE HOME AND ITS MEMORIES.

VANYARDS lies in a central position within a triangle of which Canterbury, Folkestone, and Dover would form the points of the angles. Its associations were rather with the official than the territorial aristocracy. It had been built by one Secretary of State, occupied by another; Addison had visited its trim avenues, and Pope had been a guest there, and sneered at its formal elegance. Here was a sundial with a Latin inscription, there a broken urn, and further on a classic summer-house,

which had once been dedicated to Friendship and the Muses with copious libations; but beyond these, there was little to recall the former occupants of the place.

The house looked distinguished, but somewhat dismal, with the trees about it all dripping wet, and that undefinable feeling in the air, that tells us the profusion of summer has come to an end, and the reign of fading and decaying influences has begun. Only a feeble light here and there gleamed in the windows—the travellers were not expected, the servants were strange to the house, and had not fitted into their places. Aunt Zoe and a young gentleman who was staying there had driven to some local entertainment. The hall seemed cold and chilly, the furniture looked severe and monumental, and the brighter accessories of life were altogether wanting.

But Robinson had just arrived with the baggage, and under his energetic management matters assumed a brighter aspect; a fire of logs was soon blazing on the hearth of the old oak parlour, the light dancing on the polished panels, and regilding the tarnished picture-frames, and brightening up the old family portraits. An improvised dinner was soon upon the table, and the feeling of physical weariness and depression seemed to vanish. Sir Athelstan's face, however, was still shadowed. He remembered happier days, and the ghost of his old self seemed to meet him at every turn.

Presently Aunt Zoe and her cavalier returned from their entertainment, and the former made directly for the oak parlour to embrace the new arrivals.

"What, Edie—and your father? I did not expect you for days! A fine dismal place you have got here, Athelstan! I should have run away back to my own little cottage if you had not sent me Mr. Barrington."

"What! is Barrington here?" said Sir Athelstan, in a tone of vexation. "Who invited him?"

Edgar Barrington made his appearance at the moment, and advanced towards Sir Athelstan, casting on the way a look of undisguised admiration towards Edith. The young man was splendidly handsome, his eyes dark and full of fire, his figure, although small, compact and well proportioned. He had altogether the air of a hero of romance, and Edith was pained by her father's cold reception of such a gallant youth. Something in her eyes revealed her thoughts to Barrington's quick glance, and his look of admiration was now superseded by one of gratitude and sympathy.

"Welcome home again, Sir Athelstan," said Barrington calmly, holding out a package as he spoke. "My mission has been successful, and here are the papers you wanted."

Sir Athelstan opened the packet and scrutinised its contents. Then he turned to Barrington with an altered mien.

"Thank you sincerely, Barrington," he cried; "you have relieved me from a very serious embarrassment. Edith, this is Mr. Barrington, a young man who has been of great service to me."

"And to me too," added Aunt Zoo effusively. "Of very great service; in fact, without Edgar Barrington, I should have been lost, completely lost! Lost both literally and metaphysically."

Barrington thus found himself established in the good graces of the elders without much effort. He did not doubt that he should be still more successful with the young woman. A kind of sympathy was already established between them, but Barrington judged that it would be wiser not to be too assiduous. The girl was already supplied with an adorer; his rôle would be that of one to be adored. Sir Athelstan detained him when the ladies retired.

"Now come, candidly, Barrington, who was it who sold those despatches? You won't say—was it Robinson?"

Barrington shook his head diplomatically. "I had rather not give an opinion, for I have no certain knowledge."

"Well," said Sir Athelstan lightly, "I hope for his sake that the payment was in advance, and not according to results."

"But should the despatches have been copied, Sir Athelstan," suggested Barrington, who believed that those very despatches would be public property in a few hours.

"That does not matter much," said Sir Athelstan carelessly; "we can always categorically deny their authenticity."

As soon as Barrington left him, Sir Athelstan summoned Robinson.

"The despatches are found," said the former, holding up the packet.

"I am very glad to hear it," said Robinson gravely.

"Now, have you any notion, Robinson, in whose hands they have been?"

"Sir Athelstan," said Robinson, with unruffled countenance, "I should say they had been in hands sufficiently unscrupulous to make it highly dangerous for any outside party to interfere with them."

"I can protect you, Robinson," said Sir Athelstan proudly.

"You could not protect one who was nearest and dearest to you, and whose life was of far more value than mine," rejoined Robinson doggedly.

Sir Athelstan's face lighted up with anger and indignation. He knew well enough the allusion was to his late wife.

"Such a reproach, Robinson, is terrible!" cried Sir Athelstan in great agitation. "I would have died to save her."

"I did not mean it as a reproach," rejoined Robinson. "But there is the fact—my lady died."

"And you believe, Robinson—you have believed all these years that she met with foul play—you believed it, and never said a word."

"I only suspected then," replied Robinson, "a vague, worthless suspicion—but now I know. No, Sir Athelstan, I know nothing that you would call evidence, not a fact, not the frailest link of testimony—and yet I know—it has been revealed to me."

"If it is only one of your intuitions," said Sir Athelstan, who had resumed his composure, "it may safely be disregarded. You had an intuition about my daughter, you know, and hurried me off to Eastbourne without the slightest occasion."

"We know when we suffer, but we do not know when we escape," replied Robinson sentimentally. "Do you require anything more, Sir Athelstan?"

"Nothing—except—look here, Robinson," said Sir Athelstan with unusual hesitation, "are you hard up for money? People often have drains upon them that nobody else knows about. If so, come to me, there's a good fellow."

"Thank you—no, Sir Athelstan," replied Robinson stiffly. "I have been prudent and saved a good bit, and, with my poor mistress's legacy, I could retire to-morrow, and live comfortably too. But I shan't do that till Miss Edith is safely married and off our hands."

"Hang it, Robinson, don't be so beastly selfish!" cried Sir Athelstan in dismay. "You would leave me after all these years, and when you know how helpless I am without you!"

"Only if I thought I had lost your confidence, Sir Athelstan," said Robinson, disappearing with this parting shot.

Sir Athelstan Brook had been a good deal shaken by Robinson's unexpected reproach, which opened up a passage of sorrow in his life, of which time had scarcely deadened the pain. And yet it had all happened fifteen years ago. He was a

young man then, and now he was elderly and grizzled. It was a pity he too had not died, and avoided this ridiculous anticlimax of life. He had been a Secretary of Legation when he married—married a rich Sicilian heiress, but of English extraction, the granddaughter of one of Nelson's captains who had allied himself with a Sicilian family, and settled on the island.

There were mines, vineyards, plantations, a dilapidated marble palace at Syracuse, and an old, half-ruinous castle among the mountains, with a lovely villa near Messina. The estates were supposed to carry the title of Duc di Chiosso; but the old Admiral had never cared to change his style, and his son after him was always called the Admiral, as if the title had been hereditary, although he had nothing to do with the sea or ships. Agatha Chesney di Chiosso, the heiress, was an orphan, and did not want for offers, it may be supposed; but she preferred the handsome young Englishman to all the rest. There was a business with the family council, it may be supposed, who were eager to marry their ward to an elderly Marquis as rich as Croesus. But Agatha's will prevailed, and she married the man of her choice. Mr. Brook gave up diplomacy for a time. His father, Sir Ethelred Brook, a Knight of the Gold-headed Cane, and once a famous Court physician, had left him a handsome fortune, with the pleasant seat of Vanyards in Kent, purchased out of the old doctor's plentiful harvest of guineas.

At Vanyards the young couple lived for the greater part of the year, but generally spent the winter in Sicily. They were very happy, and completely content with each other. A daughter was born to them, an idol and plaything for them both.

It was during one of these visits to Sicily, that Robinson came upon the scene. Visiting one of the public hospitals of Palermo, Lady Brook discovered a young Englishman, who had been left behind by a troupe of travelling acrobats and performers. He was penniless, friendless, and at death's door from exhaustion.

In those regions Lady Brook took all English people under her protection. She had the man removed to her mountain chateau, and there, with generous diet, fresh mountain air, and unremitting attention from Lady Brook, he quickly recovered health and strength. From that time Robinson devoted himself to the service of his benefactress; who, on her side, came to repose implicit confidence in him. He

became major-domo at Vanyards, and master of the revels everywhere. Unfortunately, Robinson never could acquire more than a few indispensable words of any foreign language, and was thus a good deal in the dark as to what passed when he was abroad with his mistress, who was then left a good deal in the hands of her step-sister, a person whom Robinson mistrusted and disliked.

Agatha's father, "the young Admiral," as he had been generally called, to distinguish him from the veritable possessor of that title, had married shortly before his death a dark-eyed Italian widow, a certain Madame Salvini, with one daughter, Sybil, who was brought up with the young heiress. Sybil was in most respects a complete contrast to her step-sister: dark, passionate, vindictive, and yet with a fire and energy about her that would not be denied. There was Arab blood in her, perhaps derived from her Sicilian ancestors; and yet, from her English education, it would not have been easy to guess her nationality. Sybil had always resented her stepsister's advantages; she had been jealous of her, with a bitter jealousy, from the moment that as children they had first compared dolls. Always Agatha had the best of everything, she complained. And when, at a grand ball at Rome, young Brook seemed first captivated by the wit and audacity of Sybil, but afterwards was attracted by the more tender charm of Agatha, the anger of the former was great. The handsome young Englishman had indeed touched her heart, all unconsciously; and Agatha had snatched him from her. Then she married soon after her stepsister, hastily, and as she said, shabbily. Captain Barrington was a roué and a gambler, who ran away from his wife, and was presently shot in a gambling affray at San Francisco, leaving his widow with one boy, with a slender pittance of her own, and with a reputation not untarnished by the breath of scandal.

Mrs. Brook, however, was warm in her sister's cause; she had been infamously treated, she must come and stay at Vanyards till some arrangement could be made. "Sybil is young yet, and charming; we will marry her to one of your rich country squires," said the Princess to her husband. To do Mrs. Barrington justice, she entered her stepsister's garden of Eden unwillingly enough; but still she entered, and from that moment mischief began.

Not on Mrs. Barrington's part, as it seemed: she made no attempt to attract

Agatha's husband, she devoted herself to her stepsister, and made herself an agreeable and useful companion. Vanyards became gayer altogether, and more attractive. Athelstan, finding that his wife was less exigeante of his society, began to follow the bent of his inclination towards politics and diplomacy. He obtained a seat in Parliament, was employed by his party in some special missions of importance; and his present and former services were recognised by the distinctions of K.C.B., C.M.G., and on the part of foreign Governments by the insignia of various Orders of unknown value and significance. In all this his wife acquiesced, but still she was not exactly satisfied.

The nearest house to Vanyards was Bloomfields, a handsome modern residence, built of white marble, noted for its hot-houses, and the property of Mr. Henry Railton, a rich London banker. Mrs. Henry Railton was the daughter of one of the chief partners in the bank, and her marriage had been the means of welding two large fortunes into one. Mr. Railton had married not exactly for love, and yet he was a kind, affectionate husband. Mrs. Railton, on the contrary, had experienced a violent passion for her mate, and was still furiously jealous of him. The two ladies of Vanyards began to amuse themselves with this well-understood weakness. Mr. Railton had always been a favourite with Lady Brook; indeed, a happy, light-hearted temperament made him welcome everywhere. But his visits to Vanyards became noticeably frequent, and Mrs. Railton was very unhappy in consequence.

Felicia Railton was not a woman to suffer silently and without complaint; on the contrary, she cried out very loudly, and took the decided step of writing to Sir Athelstan, then on a foreign mission, imploring him to prevent his wife from enticing another woman's husband away and encouraging his neglect of his lawful wife. The letter was violent, indeed rather vulgar in its violence. The only notice Sir Athelstan took of it was to enclose it to his wife, suggesting that she should strike Bloomfields out of her visiting list altogether. Lady Brook followed her husband's advice; but rumour had it that Mr. Railton still found his way to Vanyards. The rumour reached the ears of Mrs. Railton; she watched her husband jealously, and at last discovered that he sent letters constantly to someone at Vanyards. One of these letters she contrived

to intercept. It was apparently addressed to Lady Brook, and couched in passionate terms, alluding to former correspondence between the two. Mrs. Railton knew that Sir Athelstan was expected home daily. She contrived to intercept him as he landed from the boat at Folkestone, and put her husband's letter into his hands.

Sir Athelstan returned to his wife after a long separation, full of angry doubt and suspicion. Before he would even address her as his wife, he required an explanation of her relations with Mr. Railton. Lady Brook, outraged, indignant, refused any explanation. Sir Athelstan left the house at once, went on to London, gave instructions to his lawyer, and consulted a friend on the point of honour. His friend waited upon Mr. Railton, who would neither acknowledge nor disavow having written the letter. He was willing to meet Sir Athelstan if a meeting could be arranged without bringing any lady's name into disrepute, but he did not acknowledge that Sir Athelstan was entitled to demand satisfaction. These negotiations occupied several days, during which Sir Athelstan remained at his friend's country-house down in the Midland shires.

All this time he had heard nothing from his wife. He had begun to soften somewhat in his indignation. He felt that he might have acted too hastily; that his wife might have been innocent of everything but a want of discretion, and that if so, his conduct had been cruel in the extreme. One night, or rather early one morning, he awoke; there was a faint light as of dawn in the room. His wife stood by his bedside, as clearly seen as ever before, all in white as if just risen from her bed; he even noticed the lace about the neck and wristbands of her night-gown. Only by degrees, and in the course of a few moments, he began to realise the extraordinary nature of the visitation, during which time his wife's eyes were fixed upon him in a peculiarly mournful way, and yet full of love and regret. He stretched out his arms; the figure vanished into mist, its outline was visible for a few seconds and then disappeared, leaving him impressed with awe and deep yet indefinite sorrow.

Sir Athelstan was rather sceptical than superstitious, but whatever the nature of the vision, he could not shake off its effects. So strong was the impression upon him, that after writing a hasty note of adieu to his host, as soon as daylight appeared he walked to the nearest station, caught an

early train, and reached the station for Vanyards before evening. There he found a carriage awaiting him; it had been waiting for hours on the bare chance of his appearance. Telegrams had been sent in all directions. Lady Brook was alarmingly ill; the servants hardly ventured to hope that their master might yet be in time. But Sir Athelstan had the sad satisfaction of seeing his wife and taking a last farewell. She had suffered terribly since his departure, but no danger to her life was apprehended till between two and three o'clock in the early morning, when she had fallen into a swoon from which nothing could arouse her. Physicians were summoned from far and near, but her vital power ebbed still lower and lower. Her stepsister was in constant attendance upon her; she was bending over her when Sir Athelstan reached the chamber of death. At the sound of his voice his wife rallied for a moment; her eyes opened, and fell upon her stepsister with an expression of fear and repulsion.

"My darling, forgive—do not leave me," cried the husband, throwing his arms about her in despair. She turned slowly towards him; the expression in her face changed to a look of love and sorrow, the very expression that she had worn in the vision of the morning. It was a look that would haunt the bereaved husband during all the days that were to come. Then the grey shadow of death fell upon the face, and all was over.

From the sad day when he had followed the body of his beloved wife to the grave up to the present time, when he returned, grey and worn, to the scenes of his youth, Sir Athelstan had only once visited Vanyards, and had never slept within its walls. Different families had occupied the house; the furniture and pictures had remained, and yet the place looked strange and unfamiliar. But there was one little nook—and that known only to Sir Athelstan—in this very oak parlour, which was still sacred to the memory of his wife. Sir Athelstan touched a secret spring, one of the oaken panels started and swung softly forwards, and with startling suddenness was revealed the full-length portrait of Lady Brook.

The picture had been painted by the one great portrait-painter of the age, and recalled the distinction and grace of the Venetian school, with its glow of colour, but with less fleshly lustre and more spiritual expression. The mouth seemed to smile with melancholy sweetness, and the eyes in

their lustrous depths bore the expression of that solemn, hopeless sorrow, which had shone in the living eyes ere death had closed them for ever.

"Sweet spirit," murmured Sir Athelstan, "if some hellish malignity wrought the spell that parted us for ever, I would not ask to avenge thee, but only that the evil influence may be averted from thy living image. Watch over thy child, sweet mother, if in any depth of the dark, mysterious universe my voice may reach thee."

Sir Athelstan paused, as if half-expecting some sign or manifestation; and indeed, he almost thought he heard the rustle of robes and the brushing of something against the window-pane. He rose and opened the window wide, and looked out. All was tranquil gloom, with the deep purple of the starry vault stretching above the trees. He returned to the secret panel, and, touching another spring, the portrait itself swung gently forward with a strange and startling effect, as if the pictured figure had taken life and were advancing into the room. An iron door appeared behind the picture, which Sir Athelstan opened with a key he selected from two or three others, revealing a small alcove in the thickness of the wall. The sliding panel and the secret alcove were not of Sir Athelstan's contriving; they were coeval with the house, and were, no doubt, intended for the secret custody of papers of perilous importance. The picture he had caused to be placed there, partly for security, and partly because he would not have it exposed to the gaze of curious strangers and the gossiping comments of idle tongues. Within the hidden armoire he had placed a few relics of his wife, and her private writing-case, where she had kept her most intimate correspondence. About the place still hung the faint odour of roses, her favourite perfume. This casket he had taken from her bedside at the moment of her death; it had been thus carefully concealed ever since. Even now he trembled to open it, lest, after all, it should contain some terrible proof that should shatter his faith in the purity of his idol. But he took shame to himself for the thought, and opened the casket.

It contained little of importance: a lock of fair hair, which was Edith's, no doubt; a letter or two from female correspondents; the fragment of one from her stepsister, written evidently in strong agitation, begging her "for all she held dear to preserve"—but what she was to preserve was not to be discovered. Then there was a favourite

bottle of scent, his own gift, with gold-mounted tops, and a slender chain of gold. But there was another phial which he did not recognise as his wife's, a small bottle of Oriental appearance, richly cut, and adorned with small characters in gold, seemingly fused into the glass. It was ancient, undoubtedly, but it would be difficult to fix its date or period. Perhaps it was some relic of the rule of the Arabs in Sicily, that had come into his late wife's possession. Anyhow, it was singular that he had never before seen it, although it had been in use during his wife's lifetime; for the bottle was half full of some colourless liquid, probably some perfume or essence. To test this inference, Sir Athelstan withdrew the stopper, and inhaled the perfume.

Instantly a deadly faintness came over him. He sank noiselessly back upon the soft Oriental carpet, and lay stretched there in complete lethargy.

When Sir Athelstan came to himself, some hours had elapsed; a faint light of dawn was apparent. The fresh air from the open window revived him, but he still felt a strange stupefaction, and numbness of faculties. Had he experienced some sudden seizure, the harbinger of approaching death; a summons to quit the world of living souls, for the dark portals of the grave? It might be so, and yet he felt sure that the attack commenced with the first inhalation of the perfume. Rousing himself with a strong effort, he gathered up the articles he had been examining, and placed them in their receptacle. But the bottle had disappeared; he could find it nowhere. He was too stupefied at the moment to make a long search, and closed the panel and staggered away to his own room. But when a troubled sleep had cleared his faculties, he rose and made a further search; but without avail. All the other contents of the case were safe, but the missing phial was nowhere to be found.

CHAPTER VI.

COASTING. HASTINGS TO FOLKESTONE.

YOUNG Railton had seen Edith Brook depart from Hastings, with something like despair. There was no more interest left in existence. There was nothing so stupid as sailing about all alone, he said to himself; and yet, although he met sundry friends who would have possibly been glad to join

him, he did not care to ask them. Men are so coarse and unsympathetic unless they happen to be in the early stages of love's fever themselves, and then they are insupportably egotistic and selfish. In this plight Harry bethought him of his sisters; they were staying with their mother at Folkestone. That was Mrs. Railton's favourite watering-place. She liked the stir of coming and going, and the feeling that any part of Europe was within reach, although she rarely went further afield. Then there were early associations connected with the neighbouring country, although Mr. Railton had sold Bloomfields long since.

Thus as soon as the tide served, Harry went on board, and set sail, while soon the pier and promenade crowded with gaily dressed visitors, and the forlorn old castle on the cliff, with its sad and gone-by look, faded away in the distance. The wind was soft and gentle, from the west, and the yacht ran pretty close along the low flat coast, where here and there an old church tower or coastguard station, with tall flag-staff, peered over the sandy shore. Then there was a long board out seawards, to weather the far-stretching point of Dungeness, where Lydd and New Romney—and old Romney, too, for that matter—lie shrouded in the soft green marshes. Then they hugged the coast again, Harry and his crew of two men and a boy, as Hythe came into view, the old Cinque port, where no seaport is, but only shelving sands. Here is life again, with bathing-machines, and bright sunshades, and the crack of rifles and the tooting of bugle-horns from the school of musketry; but presently the sunshades are routed, and the fire of the soldiers silenced, by a driving shower or two. But the sun shines out again, smiling through weeping cloud-drifts; smiles on the red roofs of Hythe, and the grey church that towers above them; shines, too, on Saltwood's old castle on the wooded hills beyond, where once Archbishops held their guarded court, and yet which sheltered the murderers of the greatest Archbishop among them all.

Then are heard more bugle-calls, and the roll of drums, and softened in the distance, the inspiring music of a military band, with the tramp of men, and with radiant points of sunlight on the dark lines of steel; and so Shorncliffe Camp is passed, and pretty Sandgate comes in view, nestling under brightly-clad heights.

The breeze had fallen light again, and

the little yacht veered slowly towards pleasant Folkestone, as the shades of evening fell. Everywhere gleamed long lines of lights—lights from the town, lights from the long rows of terraces on the heights, reflected on the placid sea; and with the dancing lights of yachts and pleasure-boats at anchor, and the red signal-lights from the harbour mouth, gave a gay and festive aspect to the scene. Harry brought his yacht to her moorings, and rowed ashore.

At the landing-place his sisters met him, having been on the look-out for the "Unknown" ever since they had received Harry's message that he was coming. "Come with us, Harry, to see the French boat come in; she is coming along now." And sure enough the triple lights of the steamer were in full view, with the glow of radiance from lighted saloons and cabins. Harry, always good-natured where his sisters were concerned, hurried down with them to the end of the railway pier, where the tidal train was drawn up awaiting the steamer's arrival, the little Custom-house lighted up, and everybody on the qui vive. The boat glided in, and was safely moored, and the usual bustle of landing passengers and baggage began.

"There is some one I know," said Harry, as a tall, well-dressed woman came ashore with only a small travelling-case in her hand.

"I have no other baggage," she said to the Custom-house officers.

"Nothing to declare—cigars, tobacco?"

"No, I don't smoke."

"Spirits or liqueurs?"

"No, I don't drink. Now I may pass! Thank you."

It was Mrs. Barrington, but somewhat changed in manner, as it seemed to young Railton. There was an aspect of suppressed fierceness about her that he had not noticed before. Her sombre glance almost scared him, as it fell full upon him; but he saluted her politely, and asked if he could be of any service to her.

"Ah, I remember; you are young Railton. Thank you, no. Stay! When we met before, you noticed, perhaps, an ill-looking negro distributing tracts. Have you seen him since, or do you know anything about him? No? Then I won't detain you."

Mrs. Barrington passed on, and made her way on foot towards the town. The girls began to exclaim as soon as she was out of earshot. "What an extraordinary woman!" cried Blanche. "I am sure she has the evil eye." While Ethel said that

she resembled the malignant fairy who was left out of the christening party.

Harry found that the obstinacy of his mother's will could never be shaken. All along he had been sure of that, and had regarded the diplomatist's concessions as a virtual sentence of dismissal. An appeal to his father was useless, he felt, but still he made it. Mr. Railton was detained in town by business, but his son found him tolerably at leisure in his snug parlour at the family banking-house. Mr. Railton was strangely changed since the events which have been retrospectively recorded. A good-tempered, thoughtless fellow, with a strong enjoyment of all the pleasures of life, had been transformed into a serious, somewhat puritanic character, with a reputation for religious zeal and practical philanthropy. The change ought to have pleased Mrs. Railton, but somehow it did not. "He loved that woman to perdition," she said to herself, "and her death alone has brought this transformation."

Patiently Mr. Railton listened to his son's appeal. But he was not to be moved to take action in the matter. "If you can win over your mother," he said to his son, "I shall not hold out, although Sir Athelstan and I can never be friends."

Before the interview was ended, one of the chief cashiers of the bank came in and showed a certain draft to Mr. Railton, who blanched a little, but shook his head decisively.

"No; distinctly, no!" he said to the cashier, who retired, but presently reappeared, and said in a low voice:

"The lady requests a private interview."

Mr. Railton hesitated for a moment, and then motioned to Harry to retire into an adjoining room. Harry heard the key turned behind him; but the room opened by another door into the general bank premises, and not caring to wait all alone, Harry went out and began a round of visits among the clerks, who were many of them old friends of his. They were fenced off from the public part of the bank by a ground-glass screen; but a door opening showed the counters, with a sprinkling of people waiting, while a lady at one of the desks was trying to cram a large bundle of notes into a small case.

"That woman looked uncommonly like Mrs. Barrington," Harry said to himself; but then his father called him, and naturally he did not venture to question him about the matter.

CHAPTER VII. A SUMMONS FROM AFAR.

GIFTED with a strong and vigorous constitution, Sir Athelstan quickly recovered from the effects of his seizure, excepting for a certain dulness and languor.

Vanyards was now filled with guests, for Sir Athelstan had invited his friends from far and wide to celebrate his house-warming. Edith was, of course, the subject of universal attention. If not yet technically come out, yet as the virtual mistress of the house she took her share in all the gaieties that were going. There were drives, picnics, excursions by land and sea, pilgrimages to ancient shrines, and visits to London theatres; dinner parties of the stately kind, balls, and extempore diversions of all kinds.

But all this was interrupted by the receipt of a letter from that tiresome old Marquis, who was the official guardian of the Sicilian estates.

"Excellency and Dear Friend," ran the letter, "I am filled with wonder and dismay when I consider that you have taken no notice of my repeated advices."

("Where are they?" asked Sir Athelstan in wonder.)

"Do you not know that the 15th of October is the date fixed by the judgement of the Court, when, according to that judgement, the reputed daughter of Agatha di Chiosso is to be produced before the Court, and her identity fully established? And not a word, not a line from you. I, too, am in a painful position. The Court holds me responsible for the yearly sum I have remitted to your account—fifteen years at ten thousand lire a year, a hundred and fifty thousand lire—far more than I have received for my custody of the estates, my unwearied diligence, my constant services."

("The lazy old beggar!" said Sir Athelstan. "Why, he never stirs from his favourite seat in his club at Palermo, unless to be taken to opera or theatre, and duly brought back again!")

"But, my good friend, I have relied upon your honour to see me safe in this matter. Otherwise, I have had offers from the other side; splendid offers, indeed, but I was too loyal to the memory of my beloved though distant relative. Let me recapitulate, in case, by some direful chance, former letters have failed to reach you.

"It is now about a year since there arrived in the commune of Chiosso, an elderly man, who called himself the Admiral. Admiral the Third, the country people name him, to distinguish him from his

predecessors, whose memory is preserved—I will not say cherished—among my countrymen. He seems, indeed, to have held that rank in some distant nation. Now, he gives himself out as being the missing younger brother of Admiral the Second, and, therefore, an uncle of our poor lost Agatha. Now there is no doubt that his claim as such to a share in his father's inheritance, is barred by prescription. But his attack is more dangerous. He asserts that the daughter of Milady Brook died when she was five years old, and that the young lady now reputed to be your daughter is a supposititious child. 'Grand blagueur,' this man, you will say. But how if he produces a procès verbal, declared by the woman who was the author of the ruse? No doubt your justification will be complete, but bear in mind there is not an instant to lose. If our friend the Admiral gains his first step and takes possession, we shall have all our business prepared to get him out. And, indeed, unless supported, I assure you I shall have to capitulate, and make terms with the enemy. In hope that you are actually on the way by this time, I have despatched the steam yacht belonging to the estate, to await you at Malta, there to remain till the 14th October, after which date, I fear, your presence would be useless. Thus adjuring haste, haste, haste, I subscribe myself with a thousand salutations of the warmest description,

"Excellency,
"Your devoted Friend and Servant,
"DI BRAZZI."

Sir Athelstan flew into a violent passion as he mastered the contents of this letter.

"The vile impostor," he cried, "I will take him by the beard and cut his head off!" a threat which need not be taken literally, for Sir Athelstan would never have taken such an unfair advantage as to hold a man by the beard. But he was very indignant indeed, and especially wrathful that former letters had not been forwarded. Then it was brought home to him that he had given orders that Sicilian letters were not to be forwarded, and the Marquis's former letters were at last discovered in the housekeeper's store-room, where they had been placed for safety and forgotten. With guide-books and Continental time-bills before him, and Robinson to search them, it was made out that by catching the mail steamer at Marseilles, they would arrive at Malta more quickly than by any other route at present

available; indeed, in plenty of time to obey the summons of the Sicilian Court, and produce the lawful heiress of the estates to those incredulous of her existence.

From this moment all was confusion at Vanyards. Guests took their departure, promising to renew their visit on the return of the family. All were engaged in packing, in hurried excursions to Folkestone to purchase this and the other. And Edith was obliged to write and put off the visit of her schoolfellows.

"Those three dear girls," she sighed. "How disappointed they will be!"

All was ready in time, and the steamer that awaited the tidal train from London that evening had on board His Excellency the Envoy, the Envoy's daughter, his private secretary, his sister (familiarily known as Aunt Zoo), his familiar Robinson, with maids and men-servants. Just as the last gangway was removed, a young man sprang on board, and his portmanteau was hurled after him. Another of those strange coincidences so frequent in real life, as Sir Athelstan sarcastically observed. Here was Harry Railton, who had abandoned his yacht to be laid up for the winter, and was about to start on a Mediterranean tour.

"Thank God he is here!" said Robinson, who, perhaps, was not greatly surprised to see him. "There will be one more to stand up against the powers of darkness."

CHAPTER VIII.

A FLIGHT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. MALTA, SICILY, ETNA.

It was morning, early morning, the sun rising a golden ball over the purple sea, as the mail steamer glided softly into the harbour of Valetta in the rocky isle of Malta. The smoke of the morning gun curled lazily away from a white fort, and the report thundered in deep reverberations from battlement to battlement, while fife and drum wakened the echoes in the stirring but often unwelcome reveillé. The whole neighbourhood seemed to wake from its lethargy in a moment at the advent of the big steamer; boats made towards her from all parts of the harbour, and a shoal of brown and naked little natives were wriggling in the deep water, trying to entice the passengers to throw them coins, and shouting as they came to the surface: "For a dive! for a dive!"

There was a general turn-out of sleepy, yawning passengers upon the steamer's deck,

and a steam-winch was puffing away, and the boxes, trunks, and portmanteaus of Sir Athelstan Brook and his party were swinging in mid-air, almost before the mooring-ropes were secured. There was a fierce rush to secure the baggage of the new arrivals; porters and touts threw themselves bodily upon it.

But a dark Italian, in blue linen garments and a cap with narrow gold band and wide-spreading top, advanced and waved the others away.

"My people!" he said, in a voice of authority; and then, catching sight of Sir Athelstan: "Excellency, Milord Brook—yas, all right—these for Milord," handing a letter to the Knight.

"It is from the Marquis," cried Sir Athelstan, having mastered the contents of the letter. "The Court is sitting at Syracuse, and we shall just be in time. How many hours' sail from here to Syracuse, Giacomo?"

"Excellency, barely ten," replied the steward. "Everything is in readiness on board the steamer, and you have only to command."

The voyage had been a pleasant one; indeed, delightful to two of the travellers. For Harry Railton was bound for Malta, like the rest. Was not his brother Jem stationed there, whom he was hungering to see? And the passage over summer seas, coasting Corsica and Sardinia, and hardly losing sight of land all the time, had been fruitful of opportunities of quiet love making; and with father and aunt on board, Harry could not justly be accused of breaking his parole. But now the time of parting had arrived. Sir Athelstan was holding out his hand.

"We shall miss you, Railton. Perhaps we may meet somewhere on our return. Edith, there is no time to lose."

And with outward calmness the two must part, under the eye of day and among a staring crowd. But there was the warm and secret pressure of the hand which is known in the freemasonry of love. They were gone.

Then it was that Harry remembered how the ostensible purpose of his coming to Malta was to see his brother, who commanded a gunboat on that station. Singling out a sailor in the white undress of the Royal Navy, he asked him if the "Sapphire" was in port? No, the "Sapphire" had gone to Naples with despatches. Here was loneliness!

"Mr. Railton," said a voice close at

hand, "don't turn your head, but listen, please. I am Robinson; I think we are watched. There is a traitor in the party. I need not name him. Harm is intended to Miss Edith. We are going to a wild country—no roads, no telegraph, no posts worth talking about. But it is useless to follow now. Remain here till you hear from me. If there is danger you will hear more swiftly, and you will do all you can."

"But how shall I hear?" asked Harry in perplexity.

"Go to the Passaggio Monti; find Luigi Conti—everybody knows him—he deals in pigeons. Now I am called. Remember."

Soon the Isle of Malta became small in the distance—a speck—and then vanished below the horizon. The sea was perfectly calm; yachts passed, some native craft with great lateen sails idly flapping against the masts; or a trail of smoke on the horizon heralded the approach of some big steamer, making to or from the land of Egypt, and the Canal of Suez; for the vessel was crossing the track of the great watery highway of nations. Schools of dolphins disported on the surface of the deep, with backs so high out of the water, that the story of Arion seemed really not improbable, while others chased the flying-fish that leapt from the sea for short flights into the air, and disappeared in rainbow showers of spray.

Yes, it was a delicious voyage, and especially so to Edith, a little dazzled by her own sudden rise to importance—a school-girl one day, a Princess the next—to whom the world seemed almost too bright to be real. All would have been perfect, had the right somebody been by her side. As it was, young Barrington was not by any means disagreeable. His manner had changed, and in a way that flattered Edith's self-esteem. There was homage now in his voice and manner, and a respectful sympathy that invited confidence.

Before nightfall the steamer was in sight of Cape Passaro, but as soon as darkness came on, the padrone anchored for the night. There was a gentle breeze off shore, and the quiet, sleepy sounds from the land, the tinkling of bells, and bleating of cattle, with the fragrance of the orange-groves, and wandering lights here and there, excited the indefinite curiosity that arises in coming to a strange land. Then as the sun rose, the coast was in full view, the hill-tops tinged with rosy light, and far away in the distance, one glowing peak. It was Mount Etna, from which rose a slender

wreath of smoke, the breath of the sleeping volcano.

As the day opened fair and beautiful, the coast along which the steamer was running close, shone forth in every varied hue. Charming ravines opened out upon the shore, where limpid streams glided over the enamelled strand; orange-groves glowed with their golden fruit, tall date-palms waved their plumes, olive-trees clothed the hill-sides with tawny green; the cactus and the aloe bloomed by the wayside; white houses shone forth from a dark background of cypress and mountain pines.

But the party had not occasion to land at Syracuse. A little boat put off from the harbour; it contained the Marquis di Brazzi and the Registrar of the Court. To save His Excellency trouble, the Registrar would make formal entry of the appearance of the minor and her guardian, on board the yacht; and they would both, Marquis and Greffier, take a passage to Palermo, where the case would finally be heard.

Thus they sailed along the coast in leisurely fashion, stopping at Catania for Etna, where all were full of the great eruption of a few months before. Then there was the passage through the lovely Straits of Messina, with the mountains of Calabria on one hand, and the beautiful hills of Sicily on the other. They looked out for the Fata Morgana, but had never a glimpse of it, and they sailed between Scylla and Charybdis without any remarkable adventure. At Messina they were fêted, and made much of, and set sail with many promises to return and partake of even more extended hospitality. And then, among fairy-like islets, and rocks carpeted with every kind of flower, they coasted along till Palermo came in sight, a fair white city in her golden shell, the lips of which are gardens, groves, and plantations of indescribable richness and colour. And above the city frowns the mighty mass of Pellegrino, on whose scarped and inaccessible heights, Hamilcar Barca set the Romans and all their legions at defiance year after year.

At Palermo, there was more visiting, especially, by the Marquis's express injunctions, among the functionaries of the law. That was indispensable; the most righteous cause could not be sustained without the good-will of the administrators of the law; and was it to be expected they would give that good-will unasked? And Edith speedily had the whole bench on her side. All were eager to serve her. And yet—"Settle with the enemy," whispered

a high functionary in Sir Athelstan's ear, one day at parting.

"Decidedly, we must beard the lion in his den," said Sir Athelstan. "The old impostor we have come to unmask is lurking in the mountains, they say, and distributing piles of dollars among the Mafia. We shall hear of him presently as in possession of your mountain castle, Edith. We must be there before him."

And the mountains looked so beautiful, the volutes of the golden shell, and seemed to say, "Come and climb us." And so, one day, a cavalcade set out, horsemen and horsewomen, with the baggage loaded upon mules, and before and behind an escort of mounted carabineers, who kept a sharp look-out to right and left. For the Mafia had been busy lately, and brigandage was rife, and the young people of half-a-dozen communes, rather than join the army in their turn, had taken to the hills; and in the very centre of the most disturbed districts lay the Castle of Chiosso, the home of Edith's forefathers. Thus it was a long and well-armed train that rode forth that summer morning from Palermo—picturesque, too, on the whole. But everybody laughed at Robinson, who was perched on the back of a mule, with a hamper in front of him, which he would entrust to no human creature. The hamper contained neither wine nor creature comforts—only three lovely carrier pigeons.

CHAPTER IX. THE MOUNTAIN CASTLE.

THE Vale of Chiosso—don't look for it on the map, for it is necessary in this narrative to disguise the name of the exact locality—but the vale lies among the higher ranges of the Sicilian mountains. There was an old Norman tower on the rock that overlooked the pass; at the head of the valley grassy mounds hid the foundations of the walls of some settlement of the early Greeks, and on a green plateau stood the broken marble columns of a temple. The little village church was Byzantine, and some Saracenic chief had built a pleasure-house close by, whose remains were scattered here and there in fragments of glazed tiles and enamels. A rock-cut amphitheatre betrayed the finger of old Rome, and even the men of Carthage had left their impress in traces of carnage and destruction. But all the relics of old times were clothed and covered with luxurious vegetation. There was nothing of the death of winter in this land, and semi-

tropical plants flourished and flowered in wild confusion, and mingled with all the choicest blooms of temperate climes.

The successor of the old Norman castle on the rock was a modest house, built of the ruddy sandstone of the district, surrounded by a substantial wall, the whole forming a quadrangular enclosure; and the upper windows of the house commanding the whole range of enclosing wall, had probably been arranged for defensive purposes. Anyhow, when the big gates were shut and barred, and the huge watch-dogs patrolled the enclosure, there was little danger of surprise from any sudden attack. The old porter at the gate kept a vigilant eye on strangers even during the daytime, and the rope of the great alarm-bell in the turret hung ready to his hand.

A suite of rooms had always been kept in a habitable condition for the occupation of the owners of the estate, or latterly, of the factor. There was a cool, pleasant hall where a marble bust of Horatio Nelson presided over the scene, and scattered all about were portraits of the great Admiral. The lovely face of Emma, Lady Hamilton, smiled witchingly from the walls, and pictures of naval battles and trophies of arms suggested the ruling tastes of the former occupants of the castle.

At the evidences of these tastes the fastidious Sir Athelstan shrugged his shoulders. He admired Lady Hamilton indeed, but the rest was caviare to him. But Edith delighted in everything she saw. She roamed and rummaged about the deserted old chambers; and explored the country round about for miles. Here and there, from some commanding summit, the peak of Etna could be made out when sunset rays glowed on the mountain tops, and far away to the north the blue Mediterranean bounded the horizon. Distant excursions were prohibited as dangerous, although there were no signs of danger in the neighbourhood. Barrington, indeed, laughed at the notion of fear. English people had brigandage on the brain, and Chiosso was really as safe as Malvern or Mentone. Once or twice Edgar Barrington had made distant shooting excursions, had slept at cottage or cabaret, and returned without much game, but with glowing accounts of the hospitality and kindness of the neighbouring population; and on the faith of these representations the carabineers had ridden back to their barracks at Palermo.

The claimant of the estates had been heard of, but not seen. The villagers reported

him to be a very old man, who was evidently well acquainted with all the affairs of Chiosso, and who had recalled to the remembrance of the patriarchs of the village many occurrences that could hardly have been known to a stranger.

But in the course of time there came a missive from the man himself, delivered by a rough-looking mountaineer, and addressed to Sir Athelstan. The writer was an old man, and only desirous to end his days in peace, was the purport of the letter. He had no children, but he regarded the grandson of an old comrade who had been killed by his side, in the light of his own son. This young man was handsome, brave, and accomplished. Why not end this dispute and save the family honour, which would be compromised by the revelations which he had it in his power to make? Let the young people marry, and end this miserable warfare.

Sir Athelstan was too much of a diplomatist to return any definite answer. "Produce your young man," was the substance of his reply. The messenger disappeared, but returned in a few hours' time with a further missive.

"The Admiral," for so he termed himself, "was prepared to meet Sir Athelstan and produce the candidate for the hand of his daughter. There was a country tavern about five miles from Chiosso, known as Il Fosca, with a famous chestnut-tree in front of it. Under this tree the meeting would be held; the Admiral would be there at noon on the following day, accompanied only by a friend. Let Sir Athelstan bring his secretary and no other witness."

"Agreed," wrote Sir Athelstan. He took no one into his confidence; he only requested Mr Barrington to be ready to accompany him on an excursion on horseback at eleven the following morning.

"I am going too, of course," suggested Edith.

But Sir Athelstan shook his head. "I shall leave you in Robinson's charge, and you are not to stir beyond the gates till I return."

Robinson was seriously alarmed at Sir Athelstan's departure, accompanied only by Barrington, but somewhat reassured when, at parting, the Knight whispered in his ear that he was going to meet the rascally old Admiral. For it was not from that quarter that Robinson's fears were the keenest. If Barrington hoped to marry Miss Edith, he was not likely to take the part of the man who was trying to rob

her of her inheritance. Still, the faithful retainer was uneasy; and as soon as Sir Athelstan was out of sight, he mustered the garrison of the castle. It was not a strong one. Giacomo had come with the party as major-domo; he was faithful, no doubt. The engineer of the steamer, too, had joined the party, having undertaken to repair the machinery of the farm. He was a Scotchman, one Hector Macphail, now a great friend of Robinson's, and true as steel. All the English servants had been left at Palermo, except Edith's little maid.

In the meantime, Sir Athelstan rode gaily enough to the conference, chatting away to Barrington, who, for once, had nothing to say for himself, but rode beside his patron pale, silent, and agitated. Soon they came in sight of the big chestnut-tree.

"Tether our horses here, Barrington, and wait till I return; it is always well to ensure a line of retreat."

Barrington smiled a ghastly smile. "Lend me your revolver, then, and I will defend the steeds."

An old man was waiting, seated upon the bench, and beside him a companion, but, strange to say, a woman.

"He has not thought fit to bring out his young man," was Sir Athelstan's first comment. "Perhaps this is his mother."

The old man arose, saluted Sir Athelstan courteously, and exchanged with him some trifling civilities. He seemed to be a gentleman, after all. Perhaps he was not an impostor. He was a smoker, too, and the pair seated themselves amicably enough, with their cigars, under the tree. The lady had retired into the background. She was closely wrapped up in cloak and hood, and only bowed slightly in acknowledgement of Sir Athelstan's salutation.

"I will tell you my story in a few words," began the old man, his phrases interrupted by puffs of smoke. "I am the son of the old Admiral. There are few of my generation now left on the earth. I was not a good son—that I admit. I did not love my brother; I attempted his life, and had to fly. I went to America, and took service with the Republic of Peru. Some years after, I was joined by my great friend, Salvini. He, too, had been in trouble; he had killed a man, and escaped to join me. He served on board my ship; we fought the enemy together, and one day he was struck down by my side. In dying he commended to me his daughter. His wife he did not trouble himself about, and, in

effect, she did not grieve for him; and when the news of his death reached the island, she married my brother—known as the young Admiral. That daughter's name was Sybil. I fear that my trust was poorly executed—but here she is to speak for herself. Approach, my daughter, and address our good friend, Sir Athelstan.”

The truth burst upon Sir Athelstan in one vivid flash, and he saw the whole plot to which he had fallen a victim. The hoary scoundrel by his side was Salvini himself; a murderer who had escaped from justice. His story was partly true. The precious pair, Salvini and the Admiral's son, had no doubt been together in America. The latter had been killed, but his death, either by Salvini's contrivance or mere accident, had been reported as that of Salvini. The reputed widow had married the young Admiral, with whom scandal had connected her name long before. Heavens! do people's sins thus come home to roost, and settle upon their innocent descendants? What had poor Agatha done, that she should have been linked with this poisonous brood? What, Edith—who was now in the power of this scoundrelly confederacy? His own fate, he did not doubt, was sealed. He understood now the young man's parched lips and glassy tongue; a murderer had ridden by his side, and one not inured to the business, like his mother.

Thus, as the woman approached, Sir Athelstan barely glanced at her; he was thinking, How can I warn that poor girl?

“Sir Athelstan,” said the woman—it was indeed Mrs. Barrington—in a harsh, forced voice, “will you not receive my thanks for the many kindnesses you have shown me, and accept my excuses for the little mystification we have practised upon you? It only requires your assent to give it a happy ending.”

“Well, let us hear,” said Sir Athelstan, putting a strong control on himself. He was only fighting for time, and he thought the woman knew it.

“Presuming on your consent,” said Mrs. Barrington, “we have a priest close at hand. You will send a note to Edith.” Sir Athelstan shuddered at hearing those cruel lips pronounce that name. “You will send a note to Edith, asking her to join you. My son will escort her, and bring her here as his beautiful bride. The priest will soon tie the knot, and anything irregular in the union can afterwards be made good.”

“And Edith will return with me?” asked Sir Athelstan, still fighting for time.

“She will remain with her husband, of course,” replied Mrs. Barrington, with a hideous smile. “You would not part a newly-wedded pair. Edgar, are you ready?”

“I am ready, mother,” said Edgar, advancing towards the group, all held in suspense; the old man with his assumed air of patriarchal benevolence, Mrs. Barrington with her false smile, and Sir Athelstan, seemingly irresolute and undecided.

“And if I refuse?” asked Sir Athelstan, who saw that the critical moment had arrived.

“In that case, the message would go all the same,” replied Mrs. Barrington.

“I see. You threaten me! Stand aside, crew of scoundrels!” cried Sir Athelstan, dashing Edgar to the ground, and making for his horse. But half-a-dozen men rushed out from the little cabaret. One threw himself upon his knee and fired, then another; at the third shot Sir Athelstan rolled over on the turf.

CHAPTER X. A NIGHT ATTACK.

ROBINSON stood in the gateway of the Castle of Chiosso, shading his eyes from the afternoon sun, and gazing anxiously along the bridle-path by which Sir Athelstan's return might be expected. There was no distinct cause for alarm, and yet Robinson's uneasiness continually increased. It might be only fancy, but it seemed to him that the villagers, as they passed to or from their labour in their little patches of ground, cast anxious looks at the castle, as if they expected something to happen there. A young fellow stopped and said that he had heard shots among the hills—only three, but these one after the other, quite closely. But then there were often shots among the hills. Still, Robinson held himself on guard.

Presently, out of the dazzle of sunshine, came a picturesque-looking mountaineer, his gun behind his back, and approached the gate. He drew from his cartridge-pouch a letter which he handed to the porter, “For Her Excellency the Princess.” Presently Edith came bounding into the courtyard with the opened letter.

“Robinson, we are to join my father and dine under the chestnut-trees. To start at once, and Giacomo to follow with the provisions. Oh, don't look so suspicious, Robinson, and dread ambuscades from every corner. Here is the note in Mr. Barrington's own hand.”

“Then we don't stir Miss Edith,” said

Robinson. "I have your father's orders and I take none from understrappers."

Edith looked vexed and indignant; when the messenger, seeing that the answer to his despatch was in uncertainty, advanced and spoke to Edith in Italian.

"Signorina, I was forgetting part of my message. Here is your father's ring as a token that I am a true messenger."

Robinson took the ring as if to hand it to his young mistress, examined it, and motioned to the porter to seize the messenger. But the mountaineer was too active, doubling under the arms of the porter, he dashed through the gateway and up the path to the hills, a mocking laugh ringing from his lips.

"What does it all mean?" cried Edith, pale with emotion. "Can anything have happened?"

"It means, dear Miss Edith, I am afraid, that your father has got into the hands of the brigands. Don't fret; he is safe enough; they don't hurt people who are worth ransoming."

"But Mr. Barrington's letter?" urged Edith.

"People don't mind what they write with the muzzle of a rifle at their ear. What we have to do now is to keep them out of this. To-night we shall have them."

But it was a worse affair than brigands Robinson feared. Nor did he believe in his own suggestion of the muzzle of a rifle, and so on. He believed in his heart now that Sir Athelstan had been murdered. However, there was no time to be lost. The gate was barricaded; arms were examined and loaded; a plan of defence agreed upon. Robinson's plan was this; he did not claim it as original, but he had often discussed the matter with his mistress when the country had been disturbed:

Let the assailants once establish themselves within the walled enclosure, and the house was as good as captured; they must be kept outside. But the garrison was quite insufficient to man the walls; hence the defence must be made from the upper windows. As soon as darkness came on, every room on the ground floor was lighted up brilliantly, and every curtain drawn back so that the light streamed into the courtyard and lit up every corner.

"The electric light would be useful now," said the engineer, surveying the preparations. "I'll just instal a system here for you when this little job is over."

The rooms upstairs had been cleared for action, and holes broken through the par-

titions to ensure freedom of circulation. At first there had been some amount of incredulity in the household, with a feeling that Sir Athelstan would return presently, and pitch into them all. But as darkness came on, and no more tidings, all saw that something serious had happened, and worked with a will. Fortunately, Sir Athelstan had brought up with him a case of excellent breech-loading rifles, with abundance of cartridges. Even Aunt Zoo grasped one of the rifles, and vowed she would sell her life dearly. Edith moved about from one group to the other, full of quiet determination.

The night passed slowly on, and Robinson began to think that no attack would be made, when, in the stillness, a slight scraping noise was heard, and presently a man's head and shoulders appeared above the wall. The glow of light in the courtyard evidently puzzled and confused him, but as two or three shots rang out from the upper windows, he seemed to realise the situation and threw himself lightly over the wall and made for the house. A shot, however, brought him down before he reached its shelter, and he lay groaning in the space between. At the same time, two or three more heads which appeared above the wall, drew forth such a shower of bullets that they disappeared in double-quick time. Then the assailants, evidently disconcerted, retired to a distance, and opened fire upon the house—an irregular, dropping fire that knocked the plaster and slates about, but that hurt no one. After a time the firing ceased, and all was quiet once more, except for the continued groans of the wounded man in the courtyard.

"We must go and help him," said Edith; "he is wounded and suffering." The men of the party opposed this, they could not burden themselves with prisoners; but Aunt Zoo and Edith insisted on bringing him in. A bullet had pierced his neck, and he was fast bleeding to death. More of Miss Goodchild's curriculum came in useful here. Ambulance class, bandages, and compresses—Edith was skilled in all this, and stopped the bleeding, and plugged and bandaged the wound with great dexterity. The man kissed her hand gratefully; he was young, and not ill-looking or ferocious. Edith asked him gently: "What harm have we done you, my friend, that you should come and try and take our lives?"

He murmured one word, "Maffia."

"God help us," cried Robinson, "if the Maffia are against us!" The Maffia is a secret society many thousands strong, bound

under terrible penalties to obey the orders of the chiefs of the Order. All prudent people give a wide berth to the Mafia, and if they have the misfortune to offend it, wind up their affairs and quit the island.

"Ask him," said Robinson to Edith, "who set the Mafia against us?" Edith asked the question. The prisoner took a quick glance around, and replied in a whisper: "Salvini."

That was enough for Robinson, who, now that it was too late, saw, like his master, the trap into which they had fallen. But no further attack took place that night; day dawned and the Mafia dispersed, keeping a cordon, however, on watch upon the house.

As soon as the sun was fairly above the horizon, Robinson asked Edith to accompany him to the watch-tower or belfry, where beneath the louvres of the bell chamber, a small room existed, with windows looking over the surrounding country.

"Here is where our last stand is to be made," said Robinson. "We will draw up these steps, and sell our lives dearly. But there is yet a chance."

Opening the door carefully, he showed Edith that he had converted the room into a pigeon-loft, where three lovely Antwerp Carriers sat each in his box, and cooed disconsolately.

"You shall soon be home again, little birds," said Robinson. "Do you know where their home is, Miss Edith? It's at Malta, and Mr. Harry Railton knows whereabouts. You see these three little quills. Each has a letter inside, and I tie one under each pigeon's left wing. Now they are ready, miss, I shall throw them out."

"Let me hold them first," said Edith, with tears in her voice. And she took each one, and stroked it, and kissed its pretty slender bill. "Dears, you will see him; take this for me—a last loving greeting"

The birds circled upwards into the blue sky of morning, hovered irresolute for a few minutes, and then struck out in swift flight almost due south. A fusillade of shots was directed at them from the neighbouring rocks, but the birds never swerved in their flight, and were soon out of sight.

CHAPTER XL. A LOVER TO THE RESCUE.

HARRY RAILTON had not been altogether dull during his stay at Malta; he had cruised about in all sorts of craft; from the Admiral's flagship, of goodness knows how many thousand tons, down to a little crazy market boat that held comfortably only a

basket of oranges, and the brown little alip of a girl who sailed it. Then he had been a welcome guest at the various messes and clubs, naval and military.

The "Sapphire" had returned from her cruise, and Jem was engaged in harbour work at present, so that the brothers saw a good deal of each other. Harry visited Luigi every morning in the Passagio Monti, to chat with the worthy pigeon-fancier, and see if there were any arrivals from Sicily. But time went on, and no news came, and Harry was getting tired of inactivity. His brother had prevailed on the Admiral to order him out for a cruise, and had obtained leave to take Harry as a guest. A run round Sicily would be pleasant enough, and Harry might pick up some news of his sweetheart on the round.

But one morning Luigi burst into the room—the huge, cool, white-washed apartment where Harry kept house with his brother—Luigi, with a pigeon under his arm, and in a high state of excitement. Yes, there was a message from Sicily:

"Sir Athelstan a prisoner or killed. Edith and the others besieged by the Mafia. Edgar Barrington a traitor, and among the besiegers. Can hold out forty-eight hours—no longer. Six a.m., Chiosso, at the Castle, 15th January, 1887."

Harry sprang from his chair and darted out in search of his brother. Everything depended on his impressing Jem with the same ardour that he felt himself.

Luckily Jem was on board his gunboat, and mounted to a white heat at the news. A boat was manned, and was soon dashing through the harbour to the Admiral's ship. After a brief interview, Jem came out triumphant.

"I have got carte blanche. Now let us see; here is the chart; sixty miles to Terrenova, six hours. Forty miles over the hills to Chiosso, rough mule-tracks, mountain passes; can't allow less than ten hours; that makes sixteen hours, and eight to circumvent the enemy. In twenty-four hours, Harry, you shall see your sweetheart, and bring her off. Then we cut across the island to Palermo, where the boat stands in to meet us; and away before the Sicilians know how they have been licked. Will that do, old man?"

Harry wrung his brother's hand fervently. "You are a worthy successor of Nelson, old chap," he said.

There was only one stipulation the Admiral made. The boys were not to embroil two friendly nations. There was no

time for diplomatic overtures, but somehow or other the Queen's uniform must be kept out of the mess. A bright idea flashed upon Harry; his brother put him on shore, and he darted into the immense stores of Cappelonis, and bought and put in his cab twelve tourist suits of all sizes, twelve field-glasses and cases, twelve Baedeker's Guides, with twelve tourists' haversacks. Then a hurried visit to the bank, and with a sack of silver dollars and a smaller bag of gold, Harry felt himself equipped for the campaign. Jem had done his work well in the meantime, and the moment Harry came on board, the gunboat steamed away.

On the voyage the crew was mustered, and their commander called for six volunteers for a service of danger. All the crew stepped forward—they were all good men—and Jem picked out six who he thought would fit the tourist suits. Then, when the gunboat neared the shore, she put off a boat containing eight respectable-looking British tourists, to all appearance, who landed on a lonely part of the beach without exciting any attention—the whole south coast is lonely and desolate, more or less—and at once pushed on for the hills, across wastes and moors. It was now afternoon, and the way was difficult and toilsome, but the sailors were in excellent spirits. Jack regarded the whole affair as a frolic, and, delighted with his new togs, indulged in all kinds of gambols.

Luckily they came upon the head-quarters of a sulphur-mine, the manager of which was an Englishman, who lent them horses and mules, upon which their progress was far more rapid. In this way, with occasional relays, they reached the foot of the hills, and again took to marching on foot. It was dark, but starlit; they had only taken six hours on the journey, and were not more than ten miles from Chiosso. All the honest people they met strongly dissuaded them from continuing their journey. The news of the arrival of a strong party of rich English tourists had already been spread among the hills. There was trouble already in that quarter, and no man's life was safe after dark. The party engaged a guide, and passed on.

Within, as they calculated, three miles of Chiosso, a formidable obstacle presented itself. A mule-cart had been overturned across the path, trees had been felled, forming an abattis, and the barrels of half-a-dozen long guns appeared over the barricade.

"No passage," was shouted as they approached.

"By whose orders?" demanded Jem, who had picked up Italian on the station.

"The Mafia," was the reply.

"We are peaceable travellers; we may encamp in the vicinity?" asked Jem, in a conciliatory tone.

"Willingly," was the reply.

Then the party lit a fire in a sheltered spot, and prepared their evening meal in the most easy manner, and Jem and Harry held counsel together in a low voice. They must rush the barricade at daylight—the bandits would have the advantage in a night attack. Harry determined to go out on the scout, he said, and try to reach the castle.

The country was here mountainous and highly picturesque, as far as could be judged in the darkness. At the foot of the precipitous height, near the edge of which the party were encamped, could be heard the murmur of a considerable stream. Lights were visible, too, as if from a village or country-house. It was probable that its inhabitants were unconnected with the brigands, and, if so, information might be gained from them.

Harry cautiously descended the precipitous ground and arrived at a mill—a deserted mill, as it seemed, and yet lights shone from the dwelling with which it was connected. Harry made his way to the lighted window, and looked in.

An old man—such an evil-looking old man!—was sitting at a desk in a sparsely but tastefully-furnished room. In one corner of the room was a couch, upon which a form was stretched, perhaps in sleep.

To the old man entered a woman—it was Mrs. Barrington.

"Dearest," said the old man caressingly, "all is arranged; the Mafia storm the house at daybreak. All the inmates will disappear—sad necessity!—except Edith. Let our dear boy be warned; Edith will be brought to him by break of day. It now only remains to dispose of our guest here, whose tough hide seems impervious to bullets."

"I have thought of that, father," said Mrs. Barrington, producing a crystal phial enamelled with gold.

The old man's face assumed an expression of rapturous devotion as he gazed upon this phial. "But no," he said, putting the bottle back with great veneration into his daughter's hands, "he is not worthy of it. There is not much left, alas! and the secret is lost. Our ancestors had it from the Borgias. No; leave him to me, my child."

Mrs. Barrington shuddered. "Not while I am here."

"No, no; go, my darling, go to our deary boy."

The woman went out at a leisurely pace, and crossing the bridge above the house was lost to sight. The old man took out a knife, carefully felt the edge, and approached the couch. He withdrew the covering gently from the face of the recumbent figure. It was Sir Athelstan's, gaunt, blood-stained, disfigured, but still the face of a living man.

"If he wakes from that sleep, he will recover," muttered the old man; "very well, he must not wake." He lifted his knife to give the necessary quietus, when he was grasped in Harry's powerful arms. There was no room for mercy; Harry held him by the neck so that he could neither breathe nor utter a cry; held him till there was no sign of life about him.

Sir Athelstan awoke just as the struggle finished. His eyes were calm and sane; the fever of his wounds had left him.

"That was well done, my boy," he said. "Are you alone?"

Harry hastily explained how matters stood.

"Leave me," said Sir Athelstan, "I am safe here if I lock the door—no one dared disturb the old wretch at his studies. Bring your men down to the river, follow it upwards for three miles till you come to a wooden bridge; cross the bridge, follow a footpath on the left bank that will lead you to the old Norman tower. From there you will see the lights of Chiosso. Bring away all you find alive. There are horses in plenty. Do not follow the road to Palermo—they will waylay you with overpowering numbers. Come this way back and pick me up if I am alive; anyhow, cross the stone bridge here, and follow the road for six miles or so; that will bring you into a more settled country and you can easily get a guide; but Giacomo knows the way, or Robinson."

Harry understood all this, and followed Sir Athelstan's directions; he locked the door upon Sir Athelstan, and closed the shutters behind him as he passed out by the window. He rejoined his comrades unobserved. But here a difficulty presented itself. A number of the brigands had joined the party by the bivouac fire. They had been hospitably entertained. The tourists had laughed and joked with them.

"Jem," cried Harry, as he approached, "there is a lovely waterfall down here. The moon will be up soon; let us all go and have a look at it."

They all rushed down shouting and laughing, the brigands as merrily as the rest—were not their friends only walking further into the trap? But as they approached the old mill, the mountaineers enjoined silence on their companions. They evidently feared the old man of the mill. Then they passed up the bed of the river till the old wooden bridge was in sight. At first the brigands demurred to crossing this; but what did it matter? It was only further into the trap.

"Ruins! ruins!" shouted the tourists, as they came in sight of the old towers.

"Those English are mad upon ruins," murmured the bandits.

At last, then, they were in sight of the Castle of Chiosso, the inhabited castle shining as if in festivity. As usual, Harry went forward to reconnoitre, while the rest threw themselves upon the ground to rest. As Harry passed incautiously out of the shadow of the trees, a shot was fired from the house which cut the branches above his head. Harry retired into the shade again. The garrison were on the alert, evidently; but how to communicate with them without alarming the foe? Harry remembered a song he had sung once from the sea, as his boat lay beneath Aunt Zoo's cottage. Edith doubtless remembered, too, and adapting it to present circumstances, inspired by the emotion of the moment, he raised his rich baritone voice to its full compass as he sang:

When danger threatens those we love,
And light in darkness we would show,
Some inspiration from above
Guides fond and faithful hearts below.
The eyes of Love are quick to see,
The ears of Love are quick to hear.
I come, I come to rescue thee;
Courage, sweetheart, for I am near!

Believe me, dear, I would convey
Fresh life to thee in this brief song;
To bear thee from thy foes away,
Mine heart is nerved, mine arm is strong.
Oh, tremble not, nor be cast down,
The light doth through the clouds appear;
Success will soon our efforts crown,
For I am here! Yes, I am here!

Ah! darkest when the night doth seem,
And black and troubled is the sky,
The East puts forth one golden gleam,
To show the welcome dawn is nigh.
Though adverse winds blow off the land,
Cast from thine heart, love, every fear;
To rescue thee I am at hand,
The hour has come, and I am here!

As Harry's voice died away, the concluding bars of the air sounded softly in the distance, repeated on a piano. The sounds were from the castle, and Harry knew that his signal had been understood.

At the first note of the song Jem had risen, and, motioning to his men to follow him, advanced towards his brother; the brigands had risen, too, each man selecting one of the travellers. The chief brigand was a little in advance, and, coming upon Harry just at the conclusion of his song, cried, "Peace, you fool!" and was about to strike him down. This man Jem shot through the heart, and crying, "Now, my lads!" there was a general scuffle, a ringing of pistol-shots, and finally three hearty cheers from the tars, as, having disposed of their would-be murderers, they doubled across the open and made for the castle gate. Robinson was in the gateway—ah, and Edith, too. Who could paint the meeting? Words fail in the presence of such joy and love.

The Mafia was disconcerted; it knew not where nor how it had been defeated; but there was a general *saue qui peut*, which cleared the road for the next few hours. The garrison marched out unconquered, but without parade. Sir Athelstan's directions were faithfully carried out; the Knight himself was picked up and carried away on a stretcher by the tourist tars.

CHAPTER XII.

A RUN TO NICE—THE EARTHQUAKE.

WHEN the escaped garrison reached Palermo with their deliverers, their friends hailed them as though they had risen from the dead. Some rumour of the disturbances among the hills had reached the city, and the authorities had even contemplated the despatch of a column of carabineers to the scene. It was evident that the Mafia, which had been officially regarded as "extinct," was once more in full force, and no doubt many causes had contributed to the outbreak. The estate of Chiosso had been largely improved during the minority of the heiress—improved, that is, by the introduction of machinery, roads, and trams in the vicinity of the sulphur-mines. Ancient industries had been disturbed, and all the odium of the changes had fallen upon the English proprietors, little as they had to do with the matter.

"A chi ti toglie il pane, e tu togli la vita"—"Who takes thy bread, take thou his life," had been the motto of the gathering.

It would never do to stop at Palermo, everybody said, where the "extinct" Mafia had thousands of adherents. And then Sir Athelstan would recover from his wounds

much more quickly and certainly, away from the tainted atmosphere of a large town, and in the pure ozone of the air at sea. Sir Athelstan gladly accepted a passage on board Jem's gunboat, accompanied by Aunt Zoo, Edith, and the maid Alethea, the last infatuated girl actually becoming engaged to one of the "Sapphire" lads on the passage.

They looked in upon the Bay of Naples, cruised along the coast, landed at Civita Vecchia, and paid a flying visit to Rome. On the little quarter-deck they passed many a pleasant hour. Sir Athelstan was a capital raconteur, and told many of his experiences to an interested circle of all the leisurely people on board, while the men on duty would listen in snatches, and piece together the scattered fragments among themselves. One of Sir Athelstan's stories has been saved from oblivion, and, not to interrupt the thread of this narrative, will be found elsewhere.*

Presently the coast of the Riviera was reached, and the whole party disembarked at Nice, and were there joined by the rest of the suite, including Robinson, who had come over by the regular steamer some days before.

Robinson met his master with an anxious face. The post had just brought him a letter from Macphail, the engineer, which he handed to Sir Athelstan:

"DEAR ROBINSON,—

"There has been a fine hunt for the woman Barrington and her son, but they have got clean away in a sulphur steamer for Liverpool. I'm thinking yon's an appropriate medium for them—brimstone, eh? Take care of the old man and the young lady."

Robinson groaned. "I don't think we are safe yet, Sir Athelstan."

Sir Athelstan smiled. "She may have the will, but I doubt if she has the power. All her money is spent, and where can she get more?—not from me, *bien entendu*."

"A woman like that is never without resources; there are ancient lovers she may plunder," said Robinson, who had been present during the conference.

Harry started, and the blood flew to his face. He remembered now that woman's peculiar manner at Eastbourne, when she spoke of his father; he recalled the person in her likeness cramming notes into her

* "The Envoy's Story," *vide* p. 34.

purse at his father's bank ; his father's embarrassment, too. Oh, what if his father had unwittingly furnished the funds to carry on the cruel campaign against Edith and her father ?

Meantime Robinson, the map of Europe before him, was tracing the course of a steamer from Sicily to Liverpool. She would touch at Gibraltar ; yes, and the Liverpool boats touch at Cadiz—Cadiz to Barcelona—Barcelona to Marseilles—Marseilles to Nice. But would she know—how would she know where to find her quarry ? Through the porters and quay-loungers, who were all Maffia, and had seen Sir Athelstan's suite embark for Nice. Why, the woman might have been here for days, awaiting the arrival of the gunboat. And she had caught them all off their guard.

"Where is your young mistress !" cried Robinson to one of the servants.

"Gone out," was the reply, "with her maid."

Robinson ran down into the hall of the hotel. The porter had seen the young lady go out ; indeed, had called a voiture for her. A young man with dark beard and moustache, and a case of photographs under his arm, had taken his seat on the box, and the young lady and her maid had gone inside, of course. In accordance with municipal rules he had taken the address given from the voiturier. Here it was ; "Studio, Rue de la Roche, No. 15."

Robinson drove straight to the studio. It was a photographer's. No young lady was there. A fiacre had stopped there for a moment, a dark young man had made a hasty enquiry as to the price of cabinet portraits, had returned to the cab, given a fresh address and driven away. Robinson went at once to the police-office, handed in a full description of the missing persons, and of those whom he suspected to be concerned in their abduction. He returned to the hotel ; there was no news of Edith. Her father, Harry, Aunt Zoo, were all becoming uneasy at her absence ; Robinson's report did not tend to reassure them. The police soon found the voiturier who drove the missing pair. His fare had alighted at such a passage, had paid him, and he had driven off. His male passenger seemed to be guiding the other two.

The passage described was itself wide and respectable, but it led into a street of doubtful reputation and in bad odour with the police. All suspected houses were searched, and a diligent watch established, but no suspicious movements were observed.

When night came on and no news was heard of Edith, father and lover were half-mad with anxiety and suspense. The only comforting reflection was that Edith was not alone. The little maid was courageous and devoted, as she had proved during the siege. Robinson had been away for some hours ; no doubt he too was searching.

That evening through the streets of Nice, a comely-looking negro gentleman in a suit of glistening black cloth, was observed distributing tracts and leaflets wherever he went. And he went everywhere, by fashionable quarters, brightly-lighted streets of shops, business premises, industrial dwellings, and among the lowest slums and most dangerous alleys. Everywhere he distributed his tracts ; but people laughed at him, followed him, hooted him. So that he created some tumult and confusion wherever he went, and people wondered that the police did not stop his career.

It was a last desperate device of Robinson's to assume this disguise. He knew that if Mrs. Barrington were to see her old friend the negro gentleman, who had helped her with her photographic work at Pevensey, not all the danger she might run would turn her from some attempt at vengeance. He trailed himself, therefore, as a bait through the streets for all those weary hours, able to realise the feelings of the little fish attached to a hook, expecting every moment the rush of the vindictive pike.

The time was late in February, the weather cold and gloomy even in this favoured corner of the earth, while fierce gusts of the northern blast met one at every exposed corner. Robinson continued his quest, wearied, chilled, almost despairing, till night came on. At last he was rewarded.

If reward it could be called : a sharp stinging blow on the neck, like the cut of a whip, a flash and report at the same moment. Robinson staggered and would have fallen, but was supported by the friendly arm of a police agent. Another agent had secured the firer of the shot, with the pistol in his hand just discharged. In the bright light of the police-station, the assassin and his intended victim were confronted. Robinson had recovered his balance by this time ; the bullet had only grazed the neck, leaving a narrow track of white where it had removed the dark stain.

"You recognise the man ?"

"Perfectly. It is Edgar Barrington."

The young man laughed bitterly.

"We shall have you next time," he said, and then relapsing into silence, not a word more could be obtained from him.

All night long Edith's three friends, her father, Harry, and Robinson, sat up and watched and waited, taking it in turns to go out and search the streets. The news had got about, and popular sympathy was excited for the missing girls. Old women went to the churches and prayed for them; one poor, pious creature went to the father and asked for the name of Edith's mother. Agatha, she was told, and found out some obscure shrine dedicated to Ste. Agathe, put up a candle there, and spent an hour on her knees.

The night was far spent when there came a mighty rushing sound in the air, like the beating of a thousand wings, followed by a thunderous roar that seemed to pervade the whole firmament. Everything shook and quivered; walls rocked to and fro, everything moveable tumbled about, there was a crash of falling buildings. Surely the Day of Judgement had dawned at last. A terrible pause of silence followed the first shock, and then a loud wail of universal panic as the whole population threw themselves into the streets with what scraps of clothing they could grasp in the agony of the moment.

Well, it was an earthquake—nothing more.

The three watchers, being ready dressed, were among the first to help to tranquillise the terrified crowd of women and children who ran screaming through the long corridors of the hotel.

In the streets, the tumult and confusion of wild panic infected even the strongest nerves. "To the ships!" cried some; "To the hills!" cried others; and then it was said that a vast wave was approaching to drown the ships, and that the hills were about to topple over and bury all beneath them. But in the midst of tribulation joy came to the three watchers, for hurrying along the streets, asking every one they met for the Hotel des —, and getting no answer from anybody, they met the two lost girls, Edith and her little maid.

Edith's story was simple enough. A young man, a photographer, had come with a message from Harry Railton that he was waiting at the studio to have her portrait taken, with his, for a locket. "I went," said Edith; "where would I not go if he called me?" And the studio had turned out to be a bare room opening only on a little narrow courtyard; and there they

were locked up, and could make nobody hear, although they screamed and shouted till they were hoarse. And they heard a woman pacing up and down before the door, as if she were waiting for some one; and it grew dark, and at last they fell asleep in each other's arms, and knew no more till they were awakened by the earthquake shock. The side of the room fell in, but they were not hurt, and they walked away.

Edith described the route she had taken so accurately that the police next day found the house where she had been imprisoned; but the birds were flown. And to the profound grief of the police, Barrington had escaped. The shock had also thrown down the wall of the police cell, and in the confusion the young man had escaped. Thousands were thronging the railway-stations, eager to get away, and the police were almost powerless in the presence of this calamity.

CHAPTER XIII. THE DIPLOMATIST AT CAIRO.

WHEN Sir Athelstan was asked by telegraph if he would go to Cairo to confer with other diplomatists there as to the situation of affairs, he accepted the mission without hesitation. Spring was well advanced, his compatriots were flocking home, and yet he did not care to go back to Vanyards. If it were become too hot for Nice, it certainly was hotter still at Cairo; but then it is sweet and honourable to be broiled for your country's sake, while, as a mere idler, you have only the scorching for your pains. Edith insisted upon going too. Grand Cairo she had always longed to see.

Harry had gone home, his people had recalled him. He wrote every other day, and Edith employed all her spare time in answering his letters.

Nothing had been heard of the Barringtons; Nice did not hold them, that was certain. Sir Athelstan's notion was that they were awaiting his return in England. This had nothing to do with his reluctance to return to Vanyards. He had arrived at the fixed idea that sooner or later he should die at the hands of that woman, but the idea did not greatly disturb him. But he was anxious about Edith. If only that Sicilian business were settled, or if Harry's parents would join him in securing a suitable provision for the young couple, why, he would give his daughter to Harry to-morrow, and go back to his protocols and despatches.

But now to Cairo they are all gone, the Envoy and his train. Aunt Zoo still accompanies them, although she sighs for her Devonshire home. And among the perfumed bazaars, the narrow, shaded Oriental streets, and the crowds of Oriental faces, are often to be seen the forms of Edith and Aunt Zoo, mounted or on foot, but always followed and preceded by a knot of stout cavasses, for there are more scowls than smiles as the train of the daughter of the Giaour passes by. Then there are the Pyramids to be visited; and as soon as diplomacy permits, there is to be a voyage up the Nile.

But spring passed into summer, and summer reached to its height, and still the diplomatic imbroglio continued; couriers passed to and fro, messengers arrived and went with despatches. There were diplomatic dinners, too, and Khedival fêtes, but all of a somewhat chilly and elderly character, Edith thought.

And then came news that brought the colour to her cheeks again. Harry was coming out to fetch them home. He had obtained a provisional consent from his people, and as fast as train and boat could carry him he was coming.

But just then Sir Athelstan found he could get away for a few weeks, and the voyage up the Nile was commenced, and Harry was to follow. He would soon overtake them.

CHAPTER XIV. THE MYSTERIES OF THE NILE.

ALL day long the sun has blazed, and the quivering heat has made all objects indistinct; but now the sun is setting red and glorious in the yellow desert sands, a rosy light pervades the skies, and glows in distant reaches of the Nile. The tall palms bow beneath the evening breeze, the papyrus and lilies rustle gently, and the yellow river takes a cool purple tone, and a sense of coolness and repose settles upon the scene.

Not far from the banks of the river stood a military encampment, with a large marquee in the centre, from which floated the Egyptian flag. Within the marquee was a table spread with many dishes, about which were gathered a group of native officers; while at the head sat a handsome man of middle age, whose richly-embroidered tunic denoted an officer of rank. The Pasha, for thus he was termed, although perhaps this dignity had not yet been formally conferred upon him, was, in origin, a renegade Greek, whose subtle and daring

spirit had raised him rapidly to distinction. He was now on his way to the extreme frontier posts, from which the English troops had been withdrawn, charged, as far as possible, to gather up the scattered links of Egyptian domination in those quarters, and extend its influence over neighbouring tribes.

A little below the salt, if such a phrase be applicable to Egyptian feasts, sat a young man, to whom frequent reference was made, whose face indicated a similar spirit to that of the Greek, but who had not advanced so far. He was but an interpreter, in fact, who had charge of any correspondence there might be with the infidel. Had he, too, become a renegade? That is a mystery that time may never unravel. Anyhow, he was but an indifferent subject as a Christian, for his name was Edgar Barrington.

After the failure of the attempt at Nice, Mrs. Barrington and her son had parted company. They had crossed the Italian frontier, and arrived at Genoa. Their means were exhausted; but Mrs. Barrington, always well furnished with testimonials, obtained a situation as companion to an old lady returning to England, while Edgar made himself useful to an Italian steam-boat company, and obtained a passage to Alexandria. There he was upon ground with which he was familiar, and, avoiding the English colony, he had the good fortune to fall in with Mustafa the Greek, whom he had known in his less palmy days. Mustafa took him into his service, and made him interpreter to his expedition. Edgar had made himself useful to his patron, and had gained his confidence—such confidence as was possible, that is, between two such polished scoundrels.

When the feast was over, cigarettes were lighted, and the officers departed with deep salaams; and the Pasha, taking Edgar familiarly by the arm, led him outside the lines of tents and towards the deep silence of the desert.

"Well, my friend," he said, "did you reconnoitre the camp of the lovely English houri?"

A party of adventurous English had settled, as if for a day or two's stay, on the banks of the river, lower down than the military encampment, and concealed from it by a sandy bluff. The Pasha had thought it incumbent upon him to visit the new arrivals; but the gentlemen of the party were out quail-shooting, and the ladies did not receive—thus the Pasha was told rather curtly by an Italian servant. But the

Pasha had caught sight, outside one of the tents, of a female form and features which excited all the slumbering passion of his nature. He could talk and think of nothing but the English girl, and although he ought to have struck his camp and proceeded on the march this night, he had given orders to remain another day.

Edgar had undertaken to find out all about her, and had ridden forth for that purpose. It is not easy to imagine what his feelings must have been, when he saw that the English houri who had excited the Pasha's sudden passion was Edith Brook, while he recognised also the spare form of Sir Athelstan. He had not been seen himself, and he rode from the spot as if pursued by furies.

The furies certainly were raging in his breast, and a wild desire for revenge took possession of him. What should he say to the Pasha? He carefully prepared his story, tested it, and thought that it would answer his purpose.

"Highness," he said—the Greek loved to be thus addressed—"I have seen the girl, and she is all that you describe her."

"She is the daughter of some high functionary, no doubt."

"Not at all," said Edgar. "Her party are stuck-up English people; but she is the companion—to the elderly person."

"An unhappy lot," said the Pasha; "I have read about it in your English journals."

"True—that was the poor girl's own remark; and when I suggested that she had won the love of a rich and powerful Pasha, her eyes sparkled with delight. 'The handsome cavalier who visited the camp just now?' she asked, and then she gave me her portrait for you."

This was a photograph that the traitor had taken from the library at Vanyarda.

"By Allah!" cried the Pasha, "the lovely angel shall be mine."

Now, if two or three of the Arab guides who were with the expedition, could be led to make a raid upon the English camp and steal a few pots and dishes, while Edgar with an armed escort should seize upon the not unwilling girl; then the blame of the whole affair would be laid upon the desert tribes, and the Pasha might pursue his route as if in pursuit of the marauders, while Edgar would rejoin him with the lovely bride at his first stopping-place, and there receive the reward of his services.

There was some haggling as to the amount of this reward and the mode of payment.

"But hark you," said the Pasha: "fail me in one jot or tittle—and behold your reward."

In their talk they had skirted the camp and approached the river-bank, and the margin of a deep tank once used, perhaps, for irrigation, but now become a kind of marshy pool deep in mud and slime. The Pasha waved his hand, and the action startled some dark, hideous objects that protruded from the water. Two or three huge saurians gleamed for a moment visible; there was a mighty swirl in the pool, and all was still again.

CHAPTER XV. AT THE PASHA'S MERCY.

FOR once in his life, as it seemed, everything succeeded perfectly with Edgar Barrington's schemes. The Arabs made a night attack on the English camp; there was loud shouting, firing, cutting of tent-ropes, general confusion, in the midst of which Barrington, with four black Egyptian troopers, entered Edith's tent, seized upon its occupant and carried her off by main force. Shrouded in a huge Bedouin cloak, she was hurried across the desert in charge of the troopers, who showed no compassion for their victim's cries and tears. Edgar rode a few hundred yards behind, just keeping within sight; as morning dawned they came in sight of a tent, which had been pitched in advance. Here the captive was secured, while the captors kept guard outside. Any man who approached, were it Barrington or anyone else, was to be shot down; by the Pasha's orders. At nightfall the Pasha's cavalcade appeared, riding furiously. Edgar received the price of his infamy, and then, without looking backwards, rode for the nearest Egyptian post.

The Pasha entered the tent, full of compassion for the rough treatment his prisoner had sustained. But if his wooing was rough, it was sincere. He had composed this little speech beforehand, and hastily removed the rough cloak and thick clinging veil.

He started back; not that anything repulsive met his vision. The face was that of an English lady, but it was Aunt Zoo's face, not Edith's.

"Sir," said the indignant captive, "I am an Englishwoman, and the sister of Sir Athelstan Brook. Sir, you shall suffer for this outrage."

"Indeed, I think I shall," said the Pasha. To do him justice, when he had recovered from the shock, his behaviour was admirable.

He was profuse in his apologies, in his courtesies, and really succeeded in mollifying Aunt Zoo, whom he sent back with a sufficient escort. But on the instant of discovery, he despatched the four black troopers on fresh horses to pursue the false interpreter.

CHAPTER XVI. A TERRIBLE DOOM.

YOUNG Barrington scarcely drew rein till he came within sight of the Pasha's late encampment, where he resolved to rest his horse and partake of food. He had no fear of pursuit, he only feared being robbed by wandering Arabs; and once within the Egyptian lines there would be little chance of that. He congratulated himself on his adroitness, for he was now possessed of means that would enable him to indulge in a career of pleasure in Paris, or where he would. He opened his wallet, made a hasty meal, and drank sparingly of the water he carried in a gourd.

But as he rested, he kept an anxious look-out around him. The English camp had broken up, but whether the occupants had gone up or down the river hardly concerned him. The grief that the father must endure, the terrible suspense, the shame, the degradation, all this moved him not, or excited in him only a feeling of derision. Yes, he could laugh—ha, ha! The desert seemed startled at the sound, and the neighbouring hill returned the echo menacingly.

Then, as he swept the horizon of the desert, he espied through the clear yet deceptive air four mounted figures on the horizon, which as they advanced seemed in the mirage of the desert to grow strangely large and portentous. But soon he descried the Egyptian uniform, and, strange to say, he felt relieved at the sight. Perhaps the Pasha, delighted with his bargain, had sent him a further backsheesh. Again he laughed—ha, ha! and again the echo laughed back menacingly.

The four men came up like a whirlwind. One dismounted, and advanced saluting. Edgar advanced to receive his message. He was seized, bound in an instant, and carried to the brink of the tank. Then a horrid terror came upon him; he screamed, he implored for mercy.

"You had no mercy upon that woman whose screams went to our hearts," replied the negroes, who were men, not demons.

Then they swung him into the air, and he fell with a loud splash into the water.

There was a sudden awful swirl; a dozen huge backs, a dozen frightful snouts appeared and disappeared; then the waters settled again, but the ripples washed crimson for awhile. It was a terrible doom for the man—devoured by crocodiles—but no creature on earth or in heaven pitied him.

CHAPTER XVII. HOME AGAIN—THE CONFESSION—A GREAT REWARD.

Yes, they are all home again, all the English party, at pleasant Vanyards, no longer gloomy and deserted-looking, but in full life and animation. The velvet lawns are refreshed with rain, and have turned from brown to green "in a single night" with a happy effect that puts the prisoner of Chillon into the shade. The house is full of company, for to-morrow is the wedding-day of Edith Brook and Henry Railton. The breakfast-table is encumbered with Edith's letters, the drawing-rooms are impassable for Edith's presents, the corridors are strewn with Edith's dresses, while the railway-station is completely blocked with the portmanteaus and dress-boxes of Edith's friends.

As the young lady herself appears at the breakfast-table radiant and rosy, she is received with a general chorus of greeting. Sir Athelstan indignantly points to the heap of letters, and contrasts his own three circulars and "Kentish Gazette" with his daughter's wealth of correspondence.

"And those three dear girls, are they coming at last?" cries Edith, seizing upon the largest of the packets and hastily running over its leaves. "Yes, they are coming, and I must read their story presently."*

A slight chill, however, fell upon the party at the next arrivals. Mr. and Mrs. Railton were felt to be formidable persons, and Mrs. Railton was a picture of the gloom that sits frowning through enforced smiles.

Night had come on, and the Hall was brilliantly lighted up; music was in the air, and the rhythmic beat of waltz and galop. The servants were feasting, too, as a woman, dark and wan, and draped in tattered black, pushed past the back premises of the Hall.

"It's open house to-night, missus," said a groom, handing the woman a great chunk of bread and meat. She thanked him in an accent that carried the man's hand involuntarily towards the brim of his hat. But when the man had turned away, she threw

* "Three Dear Girls," *vide* p. 39.

the food savagely down and passed on. She knew her way about the place perfectly well, and went straight to the corridor that communicated with the oak parlour. Seeing that no one was about in this part of the house, for the parlour was kept inviolable for Sir Athelstan, the woman entered, and stood for a time warming her fingers at the cheerful log-fire on the hearth. Then she drew from the bosom of her dress a gilt Oriental phial, and held it to the light, which seemed to enter the bottle, and glow there in strange and living particles.

"My gift," she muttered; "the best gift of all. The bride shall sleep well to-night."

No one came near the room; sounds of joy and revelry sounded in the distance, as the woman stood listening with a bitter smile upon her face.

"Now to hide," she said, "till all the house is asleep; and then, with stealthy foot, glide and glide till we reach the chamber of the bride. You showed me the secret, Sir Athelstan," with a low, mocking laugh, making for the secret panel, which she opened after a trial or two, then trying the spring to make sure it could be opened also from the inside. In doing this she touched the second spring, upon which the picture, before hidden in gloom, swung slowly forward with startling effect, as if the deceased Lady Brook were actually stepping forward into the room; while a low voice sounded in the woman's ear:

"Sister! Murderess!"

The woman gave a loud cry, and fell senseless to the floor.

The door of an inner room opened, and Robinson came forward. He looked with something between horror and compassion at the prostrate form, and rang the bell loudly. Sir Athelstan presently appeared, full of grave concern. The woman by this time had recovered her senses, and aided by Robinson, she rose to her feet, and looked wildly around.

"Where is the other one?" she asked. "Where is Harry Railton?"

Sir Athelstan left the room to seek him; not the Harry Railton of the present day, but his father, whom no one ventured now to call Harry. Husband and wife both appeared, the latter murmuring at the sight of the woman:

"That poor Mrs. Barrington!"

"Yes, I murdered Agatha," began Mrs. Barrington. "She had found me out. I was the culprit. I had won the affections of

that creature, that whited sepulchre," pointing with a contemptuous gesture in Mr. Railton's direction. "The letters he wrote were to me. I sold them to him not long ago—to find money to raise the Mafia. I envied her, too," turning to Sir Athelstan. "I thought I should be your wife when she was gone. Yes, she died in a worthy manner—poisoned by the aqua tofana, the poison of kings and nobles. I will die too. I am a Salvini."

In a moment she had swallowed the contents of her gilded phial, and fell lifeless to the floor.

As to what is to happen afterwards, who can foretell the future? But the present seems bright and clear all round to the Envoy's daughter. For she is the great reward that our hero has attained. Even Mrs. Railton smiled upon her affectionately, and blessed her as a daughter. And to Sir Athelstan once more a vision of his wife

Came vested all in white, pure as her mind;

no longer with the look of hopeless sorrow in her eyes, but in the placid calm of an eternal repose.

THE ENVOY'S STORY.

It is the story of one of my hairbreadth escapes, strangely blended both before and after with the tragedy of a young life, that I am proposing to relate.

Constantinople on the eve of the Crimean war was a seething chaos of intrigue—though one might ask when indeed is it not—and the storm-clouds were rumbling pretty distinctly over our heads. Yet there were some of us who contrived to enjoy life, to seize the pleasures of the fleeting hour, and discreetly to ignore the vibrations of the volcano beneath our feet. I believe that my colleagues—such as survive—would unanimously assert that I was of the number. So was poor Frank Hooper, of a crack cavalry corps, then in the East on an embassy lawfully combining business with frolic, soon to return on a far sterner errand, and destined to lay down his life as a sacrifice for Queen and country on a remote Indian battle-field.

Frank and I had been at Harrow together, but had lost sight of each other since. We revived the lapsed traditions at once on meeting, and became allies in the pursuit of adventure precisely as of yore.

Frank was always romantic, and it did not surprise me to hear of his having found a distressed damsel to champion. This was the lovely stepdaughter of a rich old Circassian, living at Glité, on the Bosphorus, who treated the girl with sad brutality. Frank proposed to rescue her from her misery; but not on his own account. Oh, no!

"My attachment to the dear girl," said Frank, "is altogether fraternal."

"But a smart young interpreter of my acquaintance adores Zelia, is distracted about her," Frank continued, "and we've worked out a scheme—a beautiful little plot for which I mean to take the credit—to rescue her from the yoke of tyranny and give her to her lover. She is to be married in Pera, you and I will be witnesses; that is, if you'll consent to borrow old Brownlow's skiff—you needn't tell him for what purpose—and will just happen to be pulling leisurely at sundown alongside the eastern curve of the bay at Glité. If all goes well, Zelia and I will join you there. The remainder of the programme is already arranged. You won't refuse to assist?"

For a minute or two I hesitated, but ultimately, and after a stiff bout of argument, I yielded. It was a piece of reckless dare-devilry, perhaps. But my scruples were mainly on Frank's account, and by holding aloof I should simply affront my friend without any commensurate gain. My presence might act as a check on an ultra-sentimental or Quixotic impulse, if the event should prove that there was danger to Hooper's future from such.

And I was fated to be glad for my own sake that I had not remained obdurate.

The mad enterprise was a success, and Zelia deserved all the praise on the score of personal charms which Frank could bestow. She was passing fair, and her wild, full-orbed Oriental loveliness, of a type so different to that prevailing in sober Western lands, might easily lead captive the errant imaginations of dozens of the "gilded youth" of England and France with whom her husband of the morrow would be called upon to mix. I had roundly told Frank that his enthusiasm was ridiculous, but I inwardly recanted at sight of its object.

What Zelia's stepfather said when news of the girl's disappearance reached him, no report was forthcoming to reveal: It may be surmised that his wrath was as a flame, and that his maledictions were many. From all I could gather, he deserved small pity.

Zelia was safely married, and a load was off my mind. To the last I trembled lest catastrophe should intervene—not through the agency of the old Circassian miser and despot; ample precautions had been taken against pursuit. But unless I was a more erring reader than I supposed of human countenances, and of man's bearing towards woman and *vice versa*, it was a cargo of terribly inflammable material that I guided that chilly evening over the darkling waters of the Bosphorus. A passionate admiration shone in every glance Frank turned upon the face of the girl he had brought in triumph to the beach, and it certainly seemed to me that Zelia was as quick to discern this as are members of her sex usually, and that in her turn she was swayed by perilous emotions. Of course, gratitude to the gallant young soldier who was carrying her presumably towards liberty and love was a sentiment that she was in duty bound to feel and show. But I mis-doubted more and more as the heavy lashes drooped over the lustrous black eyes, as the bosom heaved plaintively beneath the silken robe, and as I detected an insidious melancholy in the tones of the girl's few and brief sentences. Every condition was favourable for the action of the subtle heart-alchemy by which gratitude becomes love. What if the last act of this drama should be one of jealousy and revenge? My anxiety was real and keen until the priest of the little Greek church had joined Zelia, and her acknowledged wooer, in wedded bonds.

These events constituted the first link in a life-chain in more senses than one, and even for me the curtain did not fall at that sacred altar.

Hurried as I have so often been from land to land, and clime to clime, on Her Majesty's errands, it goes without saying that I have encountered many strange and striking contrasts. But I know of no transition in the pages of my experience so impressive and so welcome as that which it was my lot to make in the war summer of 1855 from the hot, dusty, and fever-haunted camp before doomed Sebastopol, to Elysium-like Therapia. It was a change from a blighted circle infested by hideous spectres of disease and death, to an enchanted country lapped by an enchanted sea.

But I had no right to linger in my delightful Eden longer than the few days during which certain papers were in preparation. I was summoned to be the bearer of despatches to the Turkish army of

Anatolia—a more arduous mission than any with which I had hitherto been entrusted—was chosen to carry messages of (as in the pitiful issue it proved) illusory promise and vain encouragement to the gallant garrison of Kars. Not that I was to attempt to enter the closely invested fortress. My instructions were to make for Fezbur, almost within sound of the Russian guns. At a certain rendezvous I expected to meet a native Armenian who was in the secret pay of the Allies, and had undertaken to smuggle the despatches through the investing lines. As the entire province was in a state of anarchy, and, moreover, overrun with spies and the ubiquitous Cossack, I had need, in fulfilling my part of the enterprise, to exercise unwearied watchfulness, and to be ready for ugly emergencies.

A man-o'-war's despatch-boat put me on shore in a bleak, mountainous district, the topography of which was but indifferently sketched on my route map. I struck boldly out into the interior, and was in imminent peril of detection more than once, in spite of my disguise as a pretended pedlar. However, I triumphantly, by one expedient or another, evaded every risk until the last stage of my journey alone remained to be accomplished.

As I halted late that afternoon at a rude, evil-smelling hostelry—marked on my plan with the friendly sign of the Crescent as an intimation that I might safely call there for succour—a sigh of anticipatory relief left my lips. In another four-and-twenty hours I should have delivered up my burden, and be here again with my face towards the coast. The very thought of it made my heart lighter.

But I was by no means out of the wood. My self-congratulations were premature, and the sequel was to show that but for a woman's nimble wit, my enterprise would have ended in failure, and my friends in England might never more have heard of Athelstan Brook.

The innkeeper was in all externals a typical specimen of the Asiatic Turk. To cleanliness he was apparently a sworn foe, and the appointments of the dwelling were in keeping with its master. I could not resist a shudder as I sat down at the greasy board in a room the walls of which were of mud, with unglazed holes for windows, and which was minus a chimney.

But the conspicuous lack of creature comforts, and the abundant sources of offence to eyes, nose, and the sense of touch, were swept into the background and for-

gotten, through the inrush upon my mind of the curious suspicion that mine host was an impostor, and withal no stranger. He was too effusive, and yet he was ill at ease. I fancied that he neither wore his "filthy gaberdine" as to the manner born, nor exhibited familiarity with his duties as a professional entertainer of man and beast. I studied him more narrowly, and this opinion grew stronger. Had I stumbled inadvertently into the toils of the wily foe? It was a horrible suggestion, and to exorcise the fear I mechanically sought in my pocket for my chart. I would refer yet again, and be sure that I was not the victim of my own mistake.

The paper was gone! When or how it had vanished I could but vaguely surmise. The fact that it was missing was of sinister significance.

At the very moment when my confusion and dismay consequent on this discovery were at their acme, the rattle of hoofs sounded in the courtyard. I caught a fleeting glimpse of uniforms whose ill-omened appearance coincided too precisely with my present dilemma to be the result of accident. The new-comers were a posse of the renowned Russian Irregular Cavalry. And there could be little doubt that if they were on a search expedition, I was its objective. I gave myself up as lost, though, with set teeth and rising indignation at the treachery which I conceived must have existed somewhere, I resolved to perish as became an Englishman. I only hesitated whether or no at this stage to destroy the cipher and other despatches of which I was in charge. There was much that was obscure in the situation, and I could not readily decide. In less than half-an-hour I regretted the vacillation.

The door swung open, and in strode a Cossack officer of minor rank, but certainly not wanting in either the will or the assurance of the brutal despot. In execrable French—whereat I was forced to smile—he demanded my name, business, and destination. I answered with what meekness I could muster—and I was inwardly boiling with rage at the insolence of the fellow's address—and gave particulars in accordance with the rôle I was pretending to fill.

He gave me the lie point-blank, and with a scowl of vindictive triumph on his coarse features which made his aspect positively ferocious. And as he spoke he drew from under the cap of his cartridge-pouch, and waved before my disconcerted gaze, the identical route chart of which in some

vult manner I had been dispossessed. It now endorsed on the under side with hieroglyphics, that doubtless suggested to my captors the true aim of my journey. After this I had no hope left.

"You thought to take news to those curs of Turks and to their blackguard commander," he stormed; "but we have been too many for you—pedlar, indeed!—and for those who sent you. And so we shall be. Let me tell you that Kars will be ours" (Alas, in a few months' time it was, and to-day it is!), "and that your cursed Government will be glad to sue for peace yet. And as for you—wait till the general gets here, then, whoof!"

And the swarthy barbarian (it is a fair epithet) imitated the dread whistle and the dull "ping" of a bullet, with an exactness that obviated all possibility of error as to his meaning. I shall be excused for admitting that a chill struck through my veins at this dramatic forecast of my fate.

Of course I do not report the Cossack's tirade literally or fully. But I give its sense and purport. I listened to it in silence, for I instinctively felt that to answer, whether with words of defence or of defiance, would have ministered to my adversary's mood of exultation. And I preferred to treat him with contempt.

A signal was given, and a trio of the soldiers who were in waiting close at hand entered and advanced to pinion me. Or at least such I took to be their intention. But they as quickly recoiled. Light had flashed its warning from the barrel of my revolver.

There was ample force behind to have overpowered my threatened resistance, and it was in sheer recklessness of despair that I had produced my weapon. Yet the leader of the band did not issue the order for which I grimly waited. The only conclusion I can come to, is that his instructions stopped short at the offering of unnecessary violence to a prisoner in the absence of the superior whom in my hearing he had styled "the general." And he had abundant reason to think that as matters stood I was in safe custody. He recalled his men, and motioned one to take up a position on either side of the threshold within, and the third to rejoin his comrades in the passage without. Then, with an ironical salutation, he likewise departed.

Twilight deepened, the moon rose, and in the faint beams of its radiance which fell athwart the courtyard I saw a woman, closely muffled, creeping into a bend of the low wall. At first I watched her from the

room which had become my dungeon with but a slender and remote interest. I was thinking of loved ones at home whose faces I might never see again.

But suddenly I became convinced that this woman's mysterious movements had method in their seeming madness, and that she desired to communicate with me. Her manoeuvres showed that she was aware of the exact station of each of my guards, and that she was trying to reach the opening—miscalled a window—that was within a foot or two of my head, without crossing their line of vision. And this feat she accomplished. With rapid, imperative gestures intended to impress upon my mind what needed no impressing—the advisability of preserving absolute immobility of countenance and attitude, and of seeming to see no object nearer than the stars of that glorious sky—she disclosed her face.

I could not prevent a slight—a very slight—start. It was Zelia Schelye. And now, as by a flash of intuition, I read the truth of my sham host's identity. He was no innkeeper at all, but the ex-interpreter, and a Russian tool and spy. It was Loris Schelye, doubtless, who on the strength of secret information had planned the trap in which I had been taken. This was Circassian gratitude.

In a low, eager voice Zelia poured out her tale to a hearer who from the standpoint of the sentries probably seemed to be dozing. Sounds of merriment had for some time echoed from a different part of the house, where it was easy to guess a carouse was in progress, and these effectually covered Zelia's guarded tones, in addition to diverting very considerably the Cossacks' attention.

Loris Schelye had proved a tenfold harder tyrant than Zelia's stepfather. He continually ill-used her, and she hated him. Was Mr. Brown—i.e., Captain Frank Hooper—married? No? He was living and well? Zelia rejoiced at that. Would I tell him that Zelia was about to leave her scoundrel of a husband; that Loris would be sure to get a divorce and marry someone else; and that Zelia would go back to Glitë, which she wished she had never forsaken?

The same slight nod with which I had already confirmed several of Zelia's conjectures would be held to give the required promise. But how was I to make the promise good? At this moment it was exceedingly problematical whether I should ever see my ancient ally again in the flesh.

Zelia divined what was passing in my thoughts, and she was prepared with a scheme for my deliverance which, with wonderful command of signs and brevity of utterance, she unfolded. I had papers addressed to the garrison of Kars! I need not admit it—it was known. They would be taken from me, and I should be hung or shot unless I obeyed Zelia. If I gave her my despatches—she hinted at a method—they should reach the besieged fortress. Zelia pledged her word for that. The messenger to whom I was to take them at Fezbur should receive them from her own hand. And she would save my own life and restore me to liberty in spite of Loris Schelye. On the one condition, which I would surely accept!

Dare I trust Zelia! There was at least no other chance of escape; and where only desperate alternatives are available, the stake must perforce be committed to the cast of the die.

I decided upon compliance, and fearing every second lest some untoward interruption should come, or the meaning of my actions be divined by the hostile sentries at the door, I set about my hazardous attempt. Acting a part with better skill than I fancy I have shown either before or since, I seemed to recover, with a start, from an uneasy dream. I rubbed my head and neck smartly as if feeling the effects of cramp. Then, with fumbling fingers and feigned indifference, I proceeded to open my bogus pack, and selecting a packet of promising softness I lodged it against the long inner rail continued from the window, as a support (presumably) for my weariness. Perhaps half-an-hour elapsed—a period of acute and dreadful suspense. Then I ventured to lurch heavily sideways, and, as I had intended, my parcel—in which were my incriminating papers—shot through the rearward opening and dropped at Zelia's feet. I was now helplessly at a woman's mercy.

My guards did not appear even to have noticed what had happened. Perhaps, with wide open eyes, they too were dreaming.

But if my despatches were safe, how I was to be rescued from the lion's mouth was as yet less clear than I liked.

The dénouement came in the grey dawn of the next morning. I was arraigned before a stern but intelligent and chivalrous—I will endeavour to be scrupulously just—general of Mouravieff's army. Making this time no pretence at objection, I submitted to a rigorous search. Nothing came of it. My outfit was really that of a

pedlar. My foes were plainly nonplussed, particularly my Tartar acquaintance of the previous evening. But Loris Schelye came suddenly to the front—suave, serpent-like villain that he was!—and deposed emphatically that I answered in every detail to the description given of the emissary of Omer Pasha and the Allies; that he knew me; that I was no pedlar, but a young English diplomat on my way to Kars.

I demurred in French intentionally as vile as that of the grim old Cossack, and said, with perfect veracity, that my destination was not Kars, and never had been. I added, that having discovered by painful experience that war and business were no friends, I only wanted to get out of the country as soon as possible. With effrontery at which now I smile, I even apologised for drawing my revolver when first arrested, pleading in extenuation the excitement of the moment.

The expression upon every countenance was, however, one of serene unbelief, until Loris Schelye's wife was brought in to confirm her husband's testimony. She over-turned it.

Zelia—may her untruthfulness be forgiven her!—astounded Loris by contradicting him to his face. She refused to be a witness to my identity, and asserted that there was a mistake. To my infinite delight, I could see that this conflict of testimony first staggered the real arbiter of my fate, and then changed his views.

"There is, after all, no documentary proof forthcoming against the prisoner, except the plan of the district left at Deb," said the judge. "And though this is compromising, it is a slender basis for action. Let the pedlar be conducted back to Deb and released. And look you"—turning to me—"no more trading at present in these parts, on peril of your life."

I gave a humble promise on that score which I had every intention to keep. And thus Zelia had loosed my bonds; thus a second link was forged in a strange and pathetic life-chain.

Before I pass to the sequel, I ought perhaps to say that my papers actually reached the brave defenders of Kars, though the raising of the siege of which they spoke never took place. And that when peace was restored, one of my colleagues in Pera heard from Loris Schelye's own lips the account of the plot which had so nearly proved my destruction. My map had been stolen by an adroit Levantine in Schelye's service at Deb. The Turkish innkeeper had been quartered in haste in a camp

prison, and the kindly Loris had taken his place pending the arrival of Mouravieff's Irregulars. Loris had not looked for check-mate from his wife.

The Indian Mutiny followed hard on the conclusion of the struggle in the Crimea, and Frank Hooper, as I have already stated, met his death in the task of stamping out the rebellion. I did not once meet him in the interval. As the best means at my disposal of fulfilling my compact with Zelia, I had written him an elaborate account of these occurrences. I received the following reply:

"I am very sorry for Zelia Schelye. She deserved a better fate than seems to have befallen her. Something tells me that I have looked my last on the white cliffs of Albion. I'm not exactly a poor man, as you know, and I've made a will. In it there's a bequest (on Zelia Schelye's behalf) to you, of a thousand pounds. Do what is best for her. I trust you."

When there was no longer room for doubt that Frank's presentiment had been justified by the event, I set about fulfilling my melancholy duty. I went to Glité. But no Zelia could I find. Her stepfather was dead, and his household broken up; and this was the sum even of the information that came to hand, for it was scarcely material to my quest to learn, as I did, that Loris Schelye had divorced his first wife and married a second, precisely in accordance with Zelia's prophecy.

Five years went by. It was Christmas-tide, and I was at a friend's country-house in England. The family seat of the Hoopers was in the immediate vicinity, and the association brought the gallant young soldier much into my thoughts. I did not yet know that my pilgrimage into Lincolnshire would place me in possession of the last chapter in a touching history, and revive the past yet more distinctly. But it was so.

A Christmas treat had been arranged for the waifs and strays in the workhouse. In company with my host, who was Chairman of the Guardians, I went a round of inspection.

"Sad case in the Infirmary," said my guide, "mysterious case too; a woman from the East of Europe, refined, has been beautiful, I fancy—asking everywhere for a 'Mr. Brown.' Hopeless search, of course, with no better clue than so common a name. Her wanderings are at an end, though. The doctor says she is dying."

Trained dissimulater as I was, my agitation did not escape notice.

"Do you know anything, Brook?" my friend asked in astonishment.

"I must be allowed to see the patient before I reply to that," I said.

And see her I did. It was Zelia, but woefully changed and emaciated. And I was recognised in my turn. The frail frame shook with a convulsive sob; a wild hope gleamed in the sunken eyes. Zelia's question was put in a word, and that word, my old comrade's Christian name:

"Frank?"

How did she know it? Had he himself whispered it to her, and bidden her speak it to none other? These questions remain unsolved.

"Frank is—is dead," I answered simply.

It was enough. The lips quivered, but no other sound came through them. And I heard after, that that ringing appeal—echoing yet in my ears—was Zelia's last utterance. She passed away ere daybreak. Medical science gave her disease a scientific name; I call it a broken heart.

The poor woman was buried by my directions in the quiet country churchyard, where a simple slab of freestone bears the name of Zelia. Within the church an elaborate marble tablet records the gallant death of Frank Hooper. And these are the last relics of a forgotten story. Stay—I still possess a little gold locket with a broken link, which was found upon the woman when her body was laid out for the grave. It contained Frank's portrait, and it confirmed the idea I had conceived that Zelia's love had not been bestowed unsought.

And to-day a ward in a foreign hospital bears Zelia's name. Frank Hooper's money has sufficed for that.

THREE DEAR GIRLS.

CHAPTER I.

CERTAINLY, if anyone had told us that Mervyn Saltoun thought of getting married, we girls just fresh from school, with heads and hearts full of all the foolish, beautiful fancies of untried girlhood, would have received the intimation with amused contempt. He seemed so old to us, though in reality he was barely forty; he was so gloomy, with something forbidding, even mysterious in his stern, reserved manner. He was a widower—what school-girl who dreams that she is to be the first who ever stirred the heart of her coming lover, could believe that a widower was to be the king of her own! His sister said he had gone through great trouble, and that we girls must not worry or disturb him with our laughter and chatter.

"Do you know, girls, I am always wondering what his wife died of?" said Myrrha to us in a mysterious whisper one evening, as he went out of the room where he had been sitting silently reading, while we three stood in the deep recess of one of the windows, watching the mists rise ghostly and white from the low-lying fields beyond the garden. It was a chill evening at the end of October, and we were all feeling just a little sorry that summer was dead; and though we had been chattering and laughing together, we had all the time been conscious of, and oppressed by, the presence of that stern, silent man in the room behind us. We knew how much he had disturbed us, by our sudden silence as the door fell to with a sharp, impatient sound behind him. Myrrha's whisper made us all start, thrilling us with a sudden chill.

For a second we stared at each other, our faces looking pale in the gathering shadows, and then we all laughed at our own disturbance.

It was curious, however, that though Myrrha laughed quite as merrily as we did, she still seemed impressed by the spirit of his presence, for though she knew that he had left the room she glanced half fearfully behind her, and then her lovely face flushed into the most splendid scorn.

And then to find out that he loved her, and wanted to marry her! It was one afternoon in December when we discovered it, two days before Christmas. It had been a bright frosty day, and Flo and I had been out skating. We were returning home, and had reached the copse which skirted Miss Saltoun's grounds. A little gate in the wire fencing round it, opened from the copse into the high-road. We were suddenly nearly frightened out of our wits by a figure dashing out of it in the dusk, and seizing me by the arm.

"Myrrha!" we both exclaimed when we discovered who it was. She was trembling violently. "What is it?"

"That horrible man! He has been asking me to marry him, and I ran away. Oh, it was hateful!"

"How dare he?" I exclaimed indignantly.

But Flo crept suddenly close to her sister, and looked up in a curious, frightened way into her face.

"You didn't make him angry, dear, did you?" she asked. "It wouldn't be wise—having to live with them, as we have, you know, till papa sends for us."

"Flo! How can you be such a little coward!" I exclaimed.

Even Myrrha looked at her with a pained, almost wondering expression.

"I think I must have made him angry," she said; "I was so angry myself."

"You will have to write to your father," I said, "and tell him. He will take you away at once."

"But that is the—— Oh, Trix!" with a shudder, "he said something—— Do you think it possible that my father would wish it? He said so!"

"I don't believe it for a moment," I exclaimed. "I am certain, when your father arranged last summer for you and Flo to come and live with Miss Saltoun after you left school, that he had no idea of Mr. Saltoun coming to live with her too. Write to him to-night, and tell him all about it."

Their faces brightened a little at the suggestion, and by the time we reached The Croft we were in good spirits again.

We three girls had left school last August. I was an orphan, and my trustees, who were old friends of Miss Saltoun's, had placed me with her until my twenty-first birthday, when, by my father's will, I came into my property, which was a considerable one. Mervyn Saltoun was her only brother. He was younger than herself, and she had been devoted to him all his life. Myrrha and Flo Maidment were under her charge, too, till their father should return from South America, where he had been living for the last ten or twelve years. Each of them had a little money—some three hundred a year, left them by their mother. Perhaps she had been afraid of their father, who was a weak, good-natured man, easily imposed upon, and she wished to ensure the girls' comfort in case he should marry again. If either of the girls died unmarried, her portion was to go to the sister.

We three were great friends. We had arrived at Miss Goodchild's—the lady who kept the school at Eastbourne where we had finished our education—on the same day, and had taken to each other at once. The attraction had deepened into an affection almost as close as that which unites sisters, until our friendship was proverbial in the school. We were inseparable; and though we had many friends among the rest of our schoolfellows, friends whom we hoped to keep up all our lives, we had no rivals in each other's affections.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning, as we entered the dining-room for breakfast, we met Mervyn Saltoun coming out of it. We had not seen

him the night before, as he had dined out, and returned after we had retired. He greeted us in his cold, grave way, showing no sign of what had passed on the previous day. I am afraid I was too indignant even to be commonly polite and return his greeting. I do not know if the others did. I only saw when we sat down to table that a hot flush was fading from Myrrha's face, and that the anxious, frightened look that had come into Flo's face the day before was there again. It made me cross with her, and I spoke to her angrily as I had never done before. Then she began to cry, and Myrrha was angry with me for making her cry, and I, resenting her anger—for it was only for her sake I had been cross—and feeling ashamed of myself too, became still more disagreeable.

After breakfast I went out alone into the garden, feeling very much inclined for a good cry, but too proud to begin. I went down towards the copse, where I could wander about without being seen; but just as I was turning into it, Flo came running down the path after me.

"I saw you coming here," she said. "I wanted to tell you that I know you were right, dear. I am a coward, I know; but, perhaps if I tell you something you will understand me a little better. You know how silly and nervous I always am. Come," with a quick, frightened glance about her, "where we can't be heard—out into the road. I'll tell you what I heard some weeks ago. I had been reading in the recess in the library one afternoon, and I fell asleep. I pulled the curtains across to shut out the firelight which flashed on my face, and so I suppose Miss Saltoun and her brother did not see me when they came into the room. I woke suddenly, hearing them talking in low voices.

"'Confound you, Amelia!' he was saying in such fierce, angry tones, that I drew back again, for I had just been going to pull back the curtains and show them I was there. 'I won't marry Beatrice Hillyard!'"

I started, and looked, I suppose, so fiery that Flo held my arm tighter, as if she expected me to fly off and defy him on the spot. I felt like it. The impertinence of his presuming to talk as if he could marry me if he would! But Flo, with her pretty, gentle voice, went on:

"I am only telling you, dear. I think he doesn't understand you. You are always so proud, and with just a touch of contempt in your manner with him. I think he doesn't like it. But he went on: 'I don't care how

rich she is. Even though I'm a ruined man, I'll marry Myrrha—you may laugh at me as you will. I love her!' Oh, you should have heard him, Trix! Then he cursed me for having a share of her small fortune. He said if I were out of the way, she would have my part too. Oh, she might have it all, only too willingly; but, you know, Trix, I can't do anything with it. It is mine, and must remain so unless I die."

I do not know why she dropped her voice and clung closer to me. I do not know why I suddenly felt so afraid. Before, I had been only furious against him; now, I looked into her pale, troubled face, with its childlike, appealing eyes, and such a wave of fear, anger, remorse, swept over me that I forgot everything but that I loved her as a dear sister, and had been unkind. I forgot that I was on the high-road, and that hedges have eyes, and the next moment I had flung my arms round her neck, begging her pardon a hundred times, and crying like a schoolgirl—I was not much more! As we vowed never to be angry with each other again, we were quite oblivious of that hedge on the right. It was only as, lifting our tear-stained eyes to the outer world once more, we caught sight of a head and broad, tweed-covered pair of shoulders rapidly ducking behind that hedge, that we awoke to the fact that to onlookers we had probably presented a foolish spectacle. We turned and fled with flushed faces, never stopping till we found ourselves in the copse.

"He was very handsome," gasped Flo. "I hope he hadn't been listening to all we said."

"Of course he hadn't," indignantly. "He was a gentleman!"

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTMAS EVE came. We three had been busy decorating the house. It amused us and occupied our thoughts. The letter to the father had been written and sent off, and we could do nothing but wait for the answer. The rather gloomy rooms looked pretty when we had finished, and the hall we all felt to be a triumph of art. We had finished it off by hanging a great bunch of mistletoe from the swinging lamp in the middle, and now as we sat drinking our five o'clock tea round the great fireplace, we contemplated our handiwork with much satisfaction.

Myrrha had pushed her chair back under the great bunch of mistletoe, and tilting back a little, was lazily looking up at it. We were alone, Miss Saltoun being engaged

with her lawyer in the library; we supposed her brother was with her. Flo and I sat looking at Myrrha, thinking how lovely she was.

"A dangerous position," I laughed, "if there were any preux knights about. Where would you be if the prince suddenly came?"

"I think I should like my prince to find me under the mistletoe," she answered, laughing lightly too. "It is a pretty custom—when not general. The one who finds me under the mistletoe shall be the one and only one. The first man who kisses me shall be my husband."

A footfall on the polished oaken floor made us all start and look round. It was Mervyn Saltoun coming forward from the shadows of the farther end of the hall. I wondered if he had heard, but he did not look as if he had, and asked me carelessly for a cup of tea. I poured it out for him ungraciously, I am afraid. His presence had cast a restraint over us. We were all thankful when some visitors arrived. It was a Mr. James, our nearest neighbour, and he brought with him a friend. It was the owner of the head and tweed-covered shoulders. I have no recollection of the cup of tea I poured out for him. I was overwhelmed with shyness and confusion. He says he shall never forget it, and that the prettiest sight he had ever seen in the world was that oak-lined hall, with its festoons of evergreen and gleaming berries, and set in it as in a frame, three dear little girls, and the dearest—well, that was I! But then, that is only what he says.

CHAPTER IV.

I WONDER if happiness makes everyone selfish. I am afraid it was so with me. It was a fortnight after Christmas. I had been spending nearly a week with Mrs. James. Such a wonderful light began there to shine in upon my own life, that it dazzled my eyes and blinded me to the troubles of others. Douglas Hope, the young man Mr. James had brought to call on us that Christmas Eve, was staying in the house too. But when, my visit over, I returned to The Croft, all the old affections sprang into active life again, reproaching me for having been happy when my friends were suffering.

Miss Saltoun was out when I arrived; she was spending the day in the next town. I found Flo in bed. She had been unwell for the last day or two, and had felt so faint and dizzy that morning

when trying to get up that she had gone to bed again; if she were not better in the evening, the doctor was to be sent for. Myrrha had wished to send for him in the morning; but old Dr. Nash, Miss Saltoun's family doctor, was away, and there was only a young man, a stranger, taking his place, and Flo preferred waiting for Dr. Nash. I asked for Myrrha, feeling just a little hurt and disappointed that she had not come down in the hall to meet me. Such a thing had never happened before.

Flo had not seen her since four, and so I went off to look for her. I found her in the room we girls used as our own sitting-room. She did not rise to greet me, but, turning her face towards the door, sat looking at me. I ran forward, and sank down on the rug at her feet.

"Don't kiss me, Trix!" she said in a dry, hard voice, putting me from her.

"What is it? What has he been doing?" I cried, for I knew that that tone, and that look in her face were of his causing.

She flung out her hands in a wild, passionate gesture, as if thrusting from her some loathsome thing.

"Oh, no! You shan't kiss me! I am not fit! I hate myself! Do you know what he has done—Trix? Do you remember what I said under the mistletoe? Do you know that he heard it? He heard it, and—to-day, an hour—two hours—oh! I don't know how many hours ago—he found me there. I was alone in the hall; it was growing dark, and there was no one to see or help me, and before I knew what he was going to do, he caught me and drew me under it and kissed me, not once, but twenty times. Oh, Trix!" she struck her hand across her lips, as if to bruise them for their dishonour. "And he laughed, and said, he had been the first man who had kissed me, and he would be my husband."

And then she began to cry as if her heart would break. I sat silent. I could not speak. I felt as if there were nothing too bad for that man who had so violated the laws of hospitality, and humiliated the helpless girl under his sister's roof.

The next day, Mr. Saltoun had the grace to go away—for good, for he took his luggage with him.

Flo continued ailing for some time after his departure. Dr. Holt was sent for after all, and certainly, no patient could have had a more attentive medical attendant. He seemed even to me curiously interested in the case, and I felt certain that he understood much better than old Dr. Nash would

have done. When the latter did return from his holiday, Flo was quite well again.

January came to an end. February opened warm and wet, and brought on the vegetation so rapidly that the wiseacres shook their heads and said, "Spring comes too soon." Too soon! Not for us girls, with its warm moist breath on our faces, its promises of violet odours and golden primrose wealth, in every shaft of sunlight, and every shower of soft, life-giving rain. But the answer to Myrrha's letter to her father came at last. She read it alone upstairs.

When she came down, her face was perfectly white, her eyes dry and so hopeless, that the question Flo and I would have asked, died on our lips. "I am going to marry Mr. Saltoun," she said.

CHAPTER V.

It was out in the copse a little later, that my own life's question was settled. I do not know if I were crying. I must have been looking as miserable as my heart felt, for Douglas, coming suddenly upon me between the trees, was so startled, so disturbed himself, that before either quite knew what we were saying or doing, we were in each other's arms, and he was asking me what was the matter, and incoherently swearing to protect me against all the world in the same breath.

I do not know how long it was before I was able to explain, so overwhelmed was I by the glory that shone in suddenly on my own life. But I am afraid when I did, he swore a good deal, though he tried to do it under his breath. But I did not mind. I felt, if I had been a man, I should have sworn at Mervyn Saltoun myself. But he promised to help us, though he had not much hope. If, as we both suspected, Myrrha's father commanded the marriage to save himself from some peril, he must, in Douglas's parlance, be "too great a cur" to be roused from his fears, to defend her from Mervyn Saltoun. But he promised to go and look him up in South America. I am afraid it was a long time before I could get that promise from him. He did not want to leave me so soon.

So Myrrha was engaged to Mervyn Saltoun. Instead of his coming over to us, it was arranged that we should go to El Plaz, the little fishing village on the French coast where he was living. He had a house there, and it was there that his wife had died. My friends in London and Miss Saltoun herself wished me to go to London. But I could not leave those two in their trouble.

Before we left, I found out that Doctor Holt also had a secret. He had fallen in love with his pretty patient; but until he had a good home to offer her, he did not wish to speak. He seemed very anxious and troubled, and made me promise to write to him if she fell ill again.

Douglas had not yet come across the girl's father in South America, for he was always travelling from one place to another. In the meantime, we three girls were unhappy enough in that old-world fishing village on the French coast. To make matters worse, Flo fell ill again. I wrote twice to Gerald Holt, risking Miss Saltoun's displeasure, for she had strongly disapproved of his attentions; but I had had no reply. And every hour brought that hateful marriage nearer. Mervyn Saltoun, who had a house at the other end of the village, came every day. I tried to urge Myrrha to rebellion, but she silenced me; and I gathered that, to save her father, who was in Mervyn Saltoun's power, she would sacrifice herself.

I shall never forget the day before that fixed for the wedding. It was cold, and wet, and windy, and from the windows of the little house where we lodged, we could see a grey stormy sea, breaking in a white line on the beach below. It had poured all night and half the day before, and the ground was sodden. We had been busy all the morning packing, for even this hateful wedding had its preparations. Mervyn Saltoun came, between a break in the rain, to ask Myrrha to go for a walk. I never could understand that walk. I believe he had no principle, no religion. I believe physically he was incapable of fear. But it may have been that his stern, merciless nature was weakened by a tinge of superstition. Who knows what secret there was between him and his dead wife, whose love for him had become proverbial in the little fishing village where she had passed the last year of her life? She had died there, fading away slowly as Flo seemed to be doing.

It was to his wife's grave that he had taken Myrrha. Was it some superstitious atonement he was trying to make her, which induced him to take to her dead side the woman whom he was to put in her place on the morrow?

Did he think to appease, by this mockery of honour, her departed spirit, which had loved and suffered, and perhaps now knew dark and dreadful things of her own last days? He had never loved her. Miss Saltoun had betrayed that to me. He had married her for her money, and then had

discovered that her people had deceived him.

They had only been gone a short time, when a curious, suffocating cry from the couch on which Flo was lying watching us pack, made us both turn round. We sprang to her side. She was white as death, and gasping as if every breath must be her last. We called for help, the doctor happened to be in the village, and he was sent for. Miss Saltoun, who had nursed Flo devotedly, was distracted with anxiety. "Oh! She is dying! and Myrrha not here. Trix——"

But before she could finish, I had rushed out of the room, catching up a shawl as I went. I twisted it round my head and shoulders, and ran out as I was, into the wind, and the grey mist of rain driving in from the Atlantic. I ran through the village, and up the path leading to the cemetery. Fear, grief, dread of being too late, gave wings to my feet. I reached the little gate leading into the cemetery on the top of the cliff, and flew down the narrow alleys, between the tall poplars, which were drearily swaying in the gusts of wind. I saw them; he was bending down, plucking some weeds from the grave.

She was standing in the listless attitude now habitual to her. I ran up, my feet unheard in the sodden ground, and touched her.

"Dear," I said, "come!"

But before she could stir, he caught her by the arm. Did he know what was happening at home? Did he fear that if she went, she would know too? Perhaps; for it was such a terrible face which looked at us. Fear, horror, passion, baffled longing, and with all a wicked, desperate triumph, as if he defied Heaven and earth to come between him and her now.

"You shall not go!" he said, in fierce, hoarse tones. "If there are sights to see, you shall not see them. Nothing shall come between your eyes and the love with which I love you. You are mine! Mine, do you hear? What is your sister to you now? Do you think that when I have staked my soul to win you, I will let any power of earth or Heaven come between us?"

Did I imagine it—a dreadful fancy conjured up by his face, his mad words, by the dreary noises of the wind as it raged up here on this shelterless cliff, driving the grey falling rain into our eyes? I cannot say. But it seemed to me, as we two girls clung together, looking at him and quailing before the fierce fire of a passion which was so strange and so fearful a thing to our ignorant,

innocent girlhood, that the quick, drifting mists between us and him took a vague, shadowy outline. They seemed to wreath up from his dead wife's grave with its secret of life and death, shutting him out from us, shutting him in with—whom? For one brief, shuddering second, and then we saw only again the falling rain, the swaying poplars as the gust of wind, which had swept in from the sea, went sighing and sobbing inland, dying away in the long distance. Mervyn Saltoun still stood before us. But he was silent. His face was deathly white, with eyes strange and staring, and he shivered from head to foot like a man struck with a mortal chill. I pulled Myrrha away. I would not let her look at him. I told her Flo was dying. It was better for her to be roused with that shock of agony than to stand looking at him as she did.

I can hardly believe to-day, sitting writing this in the glorious August sunshine, looking forward with all a girl's eager pleasure to our visit to Kent to-morrow, that all these things happened a few months ago. He is dead. He died two days after that visit to the cemetery. The doctors said he had taken a chill. But the village folk of El Plaz have a superstition, and they persist in saying that the spirit of his dead wife seized him as he stood by her grave with his chosen bride.

And Flo? When Myrrha and I reached home that afternoon we found Gerald Holt by her side. He had been travelling night and day, and that was why he had not been able to come in answer to my first letter. He had gone abroad to study the working of a subtle Oriental poison of which he knew a little, a knowledge which had raised in his mind a dreadful suspicion when Flo was first ill. It was to study it and its possible antidote that he had left England. But he returned just in time, after all.

She is to be married on the same day as myself—one day soon after this visit to our old schoolfellow is over. Miss Saltoun believes that the sight of her lover was the turning-point in her illness, also that he was exceptionally clever, and understood the case. For her sake we leave her in that delusion. Douglas came home again, bringing the news of Mr. Maitland's death. All that I have to say is that Douglas and Gerald, and also another—a particular friend of Myrrha's with whom of course I and Flo have nothing to do—are to join us to-morrow.

When invited they all said—they being exceedingly foolish young men—that they would go to the ends of the world to meet "such three dear girls."

TABLE OF EVENTS, 1886-1887.

SEPTEMBER, 1886.

- 1.—Terrible earthquake shocks reported to have occurred throughout the Southern and Eastern States of the United States of America. The city of Charleston, in particular, sustained immense damage, and about 100 persons were killed, and many others injured.
The International Sculling Sweepstakes on the Thames (first prize, £1,200), won by William Beach, of New South Wales; John Teemer, of Pennsylvania, U.S.A., securing the second prize of £400. Seven started. Great heat (91 deg. in the shade registered at Greenwich).
- The Severn River Tunnel on the Great Western Railway, which took nearly fourteen years to construct, and cost two millions, opened for goods traffic.
- 3.—Prince Alexander of Bulgaria re-entered Sofia.
- 7.—In the International Yacht Race at New York, the American yacht "Mayflower" beat the English yacht "Galatea."
Abdication of Prince Alexander, who quitted Bulgaria after the issue of a manifesto, in which he stated why he felt compelled to take the step.
- 9.—Mansion House Fund opened for the relief of the sufferers by the earthquakes at Charleston and in Greece.
- 11.—Second and deciding match between the "Mayflower" and the "Galatea," the American yacht winning by half-an-hour.
- 15.—The St. Leger very easily won by the Duke of Westminster's Ormonde, Mr. "Manton's" St. Mirin being second, and Mr. Jennings's Exmoor third. Only seven started.
- 17.—Arrival of the King of Portugal at Buckingham Palace. His Majesty received at the railway station by Prince Albert Victor of Wales, on behalf of the Queen.
- 18.—William Beach, of New South Wales, defeated Jacob Gaudaur, of St. Louis, U.S.A., in a race for £1,000 and the Championship of the World, between Putney and Mortlake, in the very quick time of 22 min. 29 sec.
The Marquis of Londonderry made his public entry into Dublin as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.
- 19.—Renewed desperate rioting in Belfast. Their barracks being attacked by the mob, the police fired, with the result that several persons were killed and others wounded.
- 20.—Military revolt at Madrid. Two officers killed and three wounded by the insurgent troops before they were dispersed.

- 21.—Mr. Parnell's Tenants' Relief (Ireland) Bill, which was supported by Mr. Gladstone and his party, defeated in the House of Commons by a majority of 95.
The King of Portugal entertained at the Mansion House.
- 25.—Parliament prorogued by Royal Commission. The sculling match for £1,000, between William Beach, of New South Wales, and Wallace Ross, of New Brunswick, from Putney to Mortlake, won by Beach, who thus retained the title of Champion Sculler of the World.
Fatal accident at the Craræ Quarry, near Inverary, caused by choke-damp after an enormous blast of gunpowder, whereby seven visitors lost their lives and many others were seriously injured.
- 29.—Alderman Sir Reginald Hanson elected Lord Mayor of London for the ensuing year.

OCTOBER, 1886.

- 2.—Lord Randolph Churchill addressed a great Conservative meeting at Dartford. Nearly 20,000 persons estimated to have been present.
Terrible colliery explosion at Altofts, near Wakefield; twenty-one men and fifty-three horses killed.
- 3.—Demonstration in Trafalgar Square in favour of free education, and to protest against the "inquisitorial policy" of the London School Board.
- 4.—At Hawarden, Mr. Gladstone received deputations from a number of Irish ladies, and from the municipalities of Cork, Wexford, Limerick, and Clonmel, who presented him with addresses and the freedom of the cities named.
- 5.—The sentence of death passed upon General Villacampa, the leader of the recent military revolt at Madrid, and upon other officers, commuted to military imprisonment for life.
- 11.—The Spanish priest Galeote convicted of the murder of the Bishop of Madrid, and sentenced to death.
- 12.—The race for the Cesarewitch at Newmarket won by Mr. Vyner's Stone Clink, who beat Duke of Beaufort's The Cob, Mr. Hammond's Eurasian, and fifteen others. The betting at the start was 33 to 1 against the winner.
- 13.—Prince Albert Victor of Wales opened the Victoria Hospital at Burnley.
- 20.—Death of General Sir Herbert Macpherson, Commander-in-Chief in Burmah.

- 21.—General Sir Frederick Roberts, Commander-in-Chief in India, temporarily appointed to succeed General Macpherson in Burmah.
- 23.—Death of Count von Beust, near Vienna.
- 26.—The race for the Cambridgeshire won by Mr. W. Gilbert's The Sailor Prince, St. Mirin being second, and Carlton third. Sixteen started.

NOVEMBER, 1886.

- 1.—West Ham incorporated a Municipal Borough, with a Mayor and twelve Aldermen.
- 8.—Suicide of Fred Archer, the famous jockey, who shot himself while in a state of delirium, during typhoid fever.
- 9.—Lord Mayor's Show. Owing to the extraordinary precautions taken by the authorities, the expected disturbances in Trafalgar Square did not take place.
- 10.—Prince Waldemar of Denmark elected to the vacant Bulgarian throne by the National Assembly.
Retirement from the Judicial Bench of Vice-Chancellor Bacon, who was in his eighty-eighth year, and "the last of the Vice-Chancellors."
- 13.—Refusal of the King of Denmark to consent to Prince Waldemar's accepting the position of Prince of Bulgaria.
- 17.—Dr. Percival, President of Trinity College, Oxford, appointed to the Head Mastership of Rugby.
- 18.—Death of General Arthur, ex-President of the United States.
- 21.—Departure of General Kaulbars and the Russian Consular staff from Sofia, diplomatic relations between Russia and Bulgaria being thus broken off.
Large but orderly Social-Democratic Meeting in Trafalgar Square.
- 23.—Princess Beatrice (Princess Henry of Battenberg) gave birth to a son at Windsor Castle, being the thirty-second grandchild of the Queen.
- 24.—The libel suit brought by Mr. Adams against Lord Chief Justice Coleridge and his elder son, resulted, after a hearing which lasted for eight days, in a verdict for the defendants.

DECEMBER, 1886.

- 1.—The Severn Tunnel on the Great Western Railway, which was opened for goods traffic on 1st of September, opened for full passenger traffic.
- 2.—Great fire in Knightbridge Street, City, resulting in the almost complete destruction of several vast warehouses, and of the fine old City church of St. Mary Magdalen.
Terrible explosion at Elmore Colliery, near Durham, whereby twenty-five men and about seventy horses were destroyed.
- 6.—Great Meeting in London of Liberal Unionists, presided over by Lord Hartington, who made an important speech on the policy of the party with regard to Ireland.
- 8.—Arrival of Prince Alexander of Battenberg (ex-Prince of Bulgaria) at Windsor on a visit to the Queen.
- 8-9.—Tremendous gale in London and over the British Isles generally, attended with great loss of life and property.

- 10.—Terrible disaster on the Lancashire coast, off Southport, two lifeboats being upset in attempting to rescue the crew of a German ship. Out of the twenty-nine men who manned the two boats, only three reached the shore alive.
- 15.—Opening of Sion College on the Thames Embankment by the Prince of Wales, who was accompanied by the Princess and their three daughters.
- 20.—The Campbell Divorce suit, which had lasted nineteen days, concluded, with the result that the petitions of both husband and wife were dismissed.
- 23.—Announcement of the resignation by Lord Randolph Churchill of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, owing to disagreement with his colleagues on the proposed Naval and Military Estimates.
- 26-27.—Great snow-storm and severe gale in London and the provinces, causing considerable loss of life and immense destruction of property.
- 30.—Serious disaster at the Houghton Main Colliery, near Barnsley; ten men dashed to pieces, owing to a cage being precipitated to the bottom of the shaft, a depth of 1,600 feet.
- 31.—Lord Hartington definitely declined to take office in the Conservative Cabinet.
Terrible fire in the People's Park, Madras, during the annual Fair, whereby upwards of 400 persons lost their lives, of whom none were Europeans.

JANUARY, 1887.

- 1.—Great conflagration in Wood Street, City, upwards of twenty warehouses sustaining great damage from fire or water.
- 2.—Gas explosion at the Cambridge Barracks, Portsmouth, five soldiers being killed, and many others injured.
- 3.—Mr. Goschen (Liberal Unionist) joined Lord Salisbury's Cabinet as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in succession to Lord Randolph Churchill.
- 6.—At a meeting of the Southport Lifeboat Disaster Committee, it was announced that the contributions amounted to £21,000. (They finally reached the large sum of £30,000.)
- 9.—Death of Mr. Serjeant Ballantyne.
- 12.—Sudden death of Lord Idlesleigh at Downing Street, while waiting to see the Marquis of Salisbury on public affairs.
- 14.—Dissolution of the German Reichstag by the Emperor, owing to the rejection of Prince Bismarck's Army Bill.
- 18.—Special Memorial Funeral Service at Westminster Abbey, in honour of the late Earl of Idlesleigh.
Terrible calamity at the Hebrew Dramatic Club, Spitalfields, from a false alarm of fire during a performance, seventeen persons being killed in the crush, and many others injured.
- 20.—The emigrant ship "Kapunda," from London to Western Australia, run into and sunk off the coast of Brazil, only sixteen out of a total of 313 persons on board escaping with their lives.

- 21.—Collision between a Chinese transport and the P. and O. Company's steamer "Nepaul," at the entrance of Shanghai Harbour. Chinese vessel sunk, and about 100 lives lost. No damage to the "Nepaul."
- 26.—Mr. Goschen, Chancellor of the Exchequer, defeated for the Exchange Division of Liverpool by seven votes.
- 27.—Meeting of Parliament.

FEBRUARY, 1887.

- 5.—Terrible railway disaster on the Vermont Central Railway, U.S.A. Between fifty and sixty persons either crushed or burnt to death, and hardly one escaping uninjured. Verdi's new opera, "Otello," performed for the first time at La Scala, Milan, with great success.
- 7.—Sculling race on the Tyne for the Championship of England, between George Bubeare and George Perkins, both of London, easily won by the former.
- 8.—Serious mining riots in Lanarkshire. Riot Act read, and rioters charged and dispersed by cavalry.
- 9.—Mr. Goschen (U.L.), Chancellor of the Exchequer, returned for St. George's, Hanover Square, by a majority of over 4,000 votes.
- 10.—Death of Mrs. Henry Wood, the well-known and distinguished novelist.
- 11.—Mr. Parnell's amendment on the Address, in favour of Irish Home Rule, defeated by a majority of 106.
- 16.—Nearly twenty-four thousand prisoners released in India, in commemoration of the Queen's Jubilee Year.
- 18.—Terrible explosion at Cwrtwl Colliery, at Rhondda Bach, Glamorganshire, thirty-nine men losing their lives.
- 23.—Calamitous earthquakes in Italy and South of France, attended with enormous destruction of buildings, and with a loss of life estimated at from one to two thousand persons.
- 26.—Shaftesbury Avenue, the new thoroughfare connecting Charing Cross with Tottenham Court Road, opened by the Duke of Cambridge.

MARCH, 1887.

- 5.—Resignation by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach of the Chief Secretaryship for Ireland, owing to serious illness; Mr. Arthur J. Balfour appointed his successor.
- By an explosion of fire-damp in a colliery near Mons in Belgium, 144 miners lost their lives.
- 8.—Mr. Young Terry, a draughtsman in Chatham Dockyard, publicly dismissed by the Admiralty for selling information acquired through his official position.
- 13.—Discovery of a plot to assassinate the Czar by dynamite bombs; many arrests made in St. Petersburg in consequence.
- 14.—Alexandra House, specially designed for the accommodation of ladies attending the various schools at South Kensington, opened by the Princess of Wales.
- Terrible railway accident near Boston, in the United States, owing to the collapse of a viaduct; at least forty persons were killed, and about one hundred others seriously injured.

- 22.—The German Emperor's ninetieth birthday celebrated in Berlin with great rejoicing, and much pomp and magnificence, eighty-five Royal personages from all parts of Europe taking part.
- 23.—State visit of the Queen to Birmingham, to lay the foundation stone of the Victoria Law Courts.
- By a terrible explosion at the Bulli Colliery, New South Wales, eighty-five miners lost their lives, every man in the pit being killed.
- 26.—The annual University Boat Race on the Thames, between Putney and Mortlake, won by Cambridge by three-and-a-half lengths, in 20 min. 52 sec.
- 27.—In the race across the Atlantic from New York, the "Coronet" reached Queenstown in 14 days and 19 hours, her rival, the "Dauntless," arriving 36 hours later.

APRIL, 1887.

- 4.—First Meeting of the Imperial Conference, which was attended by delegates from all the principal Colonies, and presided over by Sir Henry Holland, Secretary of State for the Colonies.
- 9.—Launch of the ironclad "Victoria" at Elswick, Newcastle, one of the heaviest and most powerful war-ships ever constructed.
- 11.—Easter Monday. Bank Holiday. Monster meeting in Hyde Park to protest against the Irish Crimes Bill; 100,000 persons said to have been present.
- 13.—The London and Brighton Railway Company's steamer, "Victoria," from New-haven to Dieppe, totally wrecked on the French coast in a dense fog, and twenty-six passengers drowned.
- 17.—The P. and O. Company's steamer, "Tasmania," from Bombay, wrecked off the Corsican coast. All passengers saved; but the captain, three officers, and about thirty of the Lascar crew lost their lives.
- 18.—In the House of Commons, the second reading of the Irish Crimes Bill was carried in a very full house by 101 votes.
- 27.—The race for the Two Thousand Guineas at Newmarket, won by Mr. Baird's Enterprize, who beat Phil, Eglamore, and five others.
- 29.—The One Thousand Guineas Stakes won by the Duke of Beaufort's Rêve d'Or, Porcelain being second, and Freedom third. Twelve started.

MAY, 1887.

- 3.—The Manchester Jubilee Exhibition, opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales on behalf of the Queen.
- Serious explosion at Hounslow Powder Mills; but only one life lost, owing to it having fortunately occurred during the work people's breakfast hour.
- 6.—Opening of the Saltaire Exhibition in Yorkshire, by the Princess Beatrice on behalf of the Queen.

7.—The Kempton Park Jubilee Stakes, of 3,000 guineas, one mile, won by Mr. Barclay's Bendigo, 9st. 7lb., who beat seventeen other horses in 1 min. 43 sec.

Banquet to Mr. Goecheu, Chancellor of the Exchequer, under the presidency of the Marquis of Salisbury, in commemoration of his triumphant return for the Borough of St. George's, Hanover Square.

Collision between two large French steamers in the Channel, near Havre; about thirty lives reported lost.

9.—State Reception at Buckingham Palace of the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London, who presented Her Majesty a Congratulatory Address, upon having attained the fiftieth year of her reign.

Opening of the American Exhibition and Wild West Show at Earl's Court.

Launch at Blackwall of the powerful iron-clad turret-ship, *Sans Pareil*, built for the British Government by the Thames Ship-building Company.

10.—Visit of the Queen to the American Exhibition.

14.—State Visit of the Queen to the East End, to open the People's Palace (Beaumont Trust) in the Mile End Road. Her Majesty visited the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House on her return journey.

16.—Opening of the Liverpool Jubilee Exhibition, by the Princess Louise, on behalf of the Queen.

19.—Severe gale in London and the provinces, attended with heavy falls of rain or snow.

Collision in Atlantic between "*Celtic*" and "*Britannic*" steamers.

21.—Prince and Princess of Wales opened the Nursing Home, Library, and new Cottage Buildings of the London Hospital in the Whitechapel Road.

State Visit of the Speaker, who was accompanied by about 450 members of the House of Commons, to St. Margaret's, Westminster, on which occasion a special sermon was preached by the Bishop of Ripon.

25.—The Epsom Derby easily won by Mr. Abington's Merry Hampton, an outsider, who beat Mr. Fern's The Baron, Mr. Douglas's Martley, and eight others in the good time of 2 min. 43 sec.

The Opera Comique Theatre, in Paris, totally destroyed by a fire which broke out during the performance, with the calamitous result that about 130 persons lost their lives, and a great many others were more or less seriously injured.

26.—The Stables of the Belt Line Cab Company, New York, consumed by fire. Besides a serious loss of human life, 1,600 horses perished in the flames, and a vast amount of property destroyed.

27.—The Oaks won by the Duke of Beaufort's Rêve d'Or, Mr. Valentine's St. Helen being second, and the Duke of Westminster's Freedom third. Nine started, and the race was run in 2 min. 50 sec.

28.—Terrible colliery explosion at High Blantyre, near Glasgow, eighty of the men in the pit at the time losing their lives.

30.—Whit Monday. Bank Holiday. The fine weather which prevailed had the effect of attracting vast crowds to the various places of outdoor amusement in and round the metropolis, the Crystal Palace being particularly well attended. The various railway lines also were kept very busy, and conveyed immense numbers to the seaside and suburban London.

JUNE, 1887.

2.—Arrival at Liverpool of the Queen of Hawaii, on a visit to the Queen on her Jubilee celebration.

The Manchester Cup won by Mr. Somers' Carlton, who beat Quilp, Radius, and eleven others.

3.—The race for the Manchester Whitsuntide Plate, value £5,000, for two-year-olds, won by Mr. D. Baird's filly Briar-root, in a field of nineteen horses; and, somewhat curiously, on the same day, at Sandown, Mr. Baird also won the Electric Stakes, worth £2,000, for three-year-olds, with Woodland (own brother to Briar-root), who beat the favourite, Rêve d'Or (winner of the Oaks), and four others.

5.—The Grand Prix of Paris, value 6,000 sovereigns (1 mile 7 furlongs), the only flat race in France open to other than French horses, won by M. Aumont's filly Ténébreuse, who beat The Baron, who was second, and nine others. The favourite, Merry Hampton, the English Derby winner, only came in fourth. Time, 3 min. 34 sec.

7.—At Ascot, the Jubilee Cup, value £1,000, with 6,000 sovereigns added, was won by Mr. Vyner's Minting, beating St. Mirin, Bendigo (the favourite), and four others; and the race for the Ascot Stakes by Mr. Hammond's Eurasian, who beat Exmoor, Beaver, and four others.

9.—The Ascot Gold Cup, won by Mr. D. Baird's Bird of Freedom, in a field of six, which included The Baron and Rêve d'Or; and the race for the Rous Memorial Stakes was very easily landed by the Duke of Westminster's Ormonde, on whom the odds of 4 to 1 were laid.

10.—At Ascot, in the Hardwicke Stakes of £2,000 (1½ miles), the renowned Ormonde just managed to preserve his unbeaten certificate, as he only won from Minting by a neck, after a desperate race and most exciting finish. Only four started, Bendigo being a bad third. Time, 2 min. 44 sec.

14.—The eleven yachts, competing for the Jubilee race for £1,000, round the United Kingdom, started from Southend by the Prince of Wales.

17.—The Irish Crimes Bill passed its Committee stage.

18.—Prince Albert Victor performed the ceremony of opening the Hammersmith New Bridge, and afterwards laid the memorial stone of the bridge about to be erected across the Thames at Battersea.

20.—The new Tay Railway Bridge, which is upwards of two miles long, opened for passenger traffic. The bridge occupied five years in construction, and cost about three-quarters of a million sterling.

- 21.—Jubilee Day. The Queen proceeded to Westminster Abbey in full State to give thanks for the completion of the fiftieth year of her prosperous reign.
- 22.—Great gathering, by means of very liberal public subscriptions, including £1,000 from the "Daily Telegraph," of nearly 30,000 London school children in Hyde Park, in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee.
- 23.—Jubilee Festivities at Windsor.
Jubilee Thanksgiving in St. Paul's Cathedral.
- 24.—Jubilee Entertainment to ten thousand East End schoolboys at the People's Palace, and fifteen thousand children of Battersea district at the Albert Palace.
- 27.—The Jubilee Yacht Race round the United Kingdom, which started from Southend on the 14th instant, won by Sir Richard Sutton's cutter, "Geneata," 85 tons, which completed the distance of about 2,000 miles in 12 days 17 hours.
Visit to Dublin of Prince Albert Victor and Prince George of Wales, to take part in the Jubilee celebration in that city.
- 28.—Grand Jubilee Reception and Ball at the Guildhall.
- 29.—State Garden Party in the grounds of Buckingham Palace.

JULY, 1837.

- 1.—Henley Regatta concluded in magnificent weather, the presence of the Prince and Princess of Wales and their Royal guests attracting an unusually large number of visitors. Its peculiar feature was that Cambridge University Crews won the finals of all the races.
- 2.—March-past of nearly 24,000 Metropolitan and Home County Volunteers before the Queen near Buckingham Palace.
- 4.—Foundation-stone of the Imperial Institute at South Kensington laid by the Queen, in presence of a large and distinguished company.
- 5.—Owing to a landslip at Zug, in Switzerland, thirty-five houses, and part of a new quay, fell into the lake, a considerable number of persons unfortunately losing their lives.
- 6.—The annual University cricket match resulted in Oxford winning by seven wickets.
- 7.—Election of Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg by the Sobranje to the throne of Bulgaria.
- 8.—The Irish Crimes Bill finally carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 87.
- 9.—In usual "Queen's weather" Her Majesty reviewed about 58,000 troops, Regulars and Volunteers, at Aldershot.
- 13.—The Queen, Princess of Wales, and many other Royal and distinguished personages, were present at a Garden Party given by the Marquis and Marchioness of Salisbury at Hatfield House.
- 14.—Foundation-stone of a statue of the late Prince Consort, to which a large portion of the Women's Jubilee Gift had been devoted, laid by the Queen in Windsor Great Park.
- 15.—Terrible railway accident at St. Thomas, in Canada.

- 19.—At Wimbledon, the Queen's Prize of £250, with the gold medal and badge, was won by Lieutenant Warren, 1st Middlesex (Victoria Rifles), with a total of 274 points, the best on record.
The Irish Crimes Bill received the Royal Assent.
- 23.—Eighteen Irish counties proclaimed to be under the operation of all the provisions of the Irish Crimes Act. In other parts of the Kingdom only portions of the Act were proclaimed to be in force.
In splendid weather took place the last, and certainly the greatest event of the Jubilee season, namely, the great Naval Review at Spithead by the Queen.
- 28.—The Goodwood Cup won by the Duke of Westminster's Savile, after a dead heat with Mr. Baird's St. Michael, only three others running; and the rich Prince of Wales Stakes, for two-year-olds, by the Duke of Portland's Ayrshire, who beat Simon Pure and four other horses.
- 29.—The Goodwood Stakes won by Mr. Somers's Carlton, who beat Mr. L. de Rothschild's Beaver and three others.

AUGUST, 1837.

- 1.—August Bank Holiday, favoured by brilliant weather.
- 2.—Sir George Trevelyan, Gladstonian, elected for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow by a majority of 1,401 over Mr. Evelyn Ashley, Liberal Unionist. At the last election the Home Rule Candidate had a majority of 797.
- 5.—Complimentary dinner given at Greenwich to the Marquis of Hartington, by the Liberal Unionist Members of Parliament, under the presidency of Mr. John Bright.
Serious strike of engine-drivers and firemen of the goods trains on the Midland Railway system.
- 6.—Meeting of the Emperors of Germany and Austria at Gastein.
At a special sitting of the House of Commons, the Irish Land Bill was read a third time and passed.
Disastrous and fatal fire at Whiteley's in the Queen's Road, Bayswater.
Great heat in London, 90 deg. in the shade, and upwards of 145 deg. in the sun, registered at Greenwich.
- 9.—The 500th anniversary of the birth of Henry the Fifth ("Harry of Monmouth"), celebrated with great festivity at Monmouth, the place of his birth.
- 10.—Her Majesty's Ministers entertained at a banquet at the Mansion House.
- 11.—A very terrible railway catastrophe took place in Illinois in the United States.
- 12.—The Prince of Wales, who was accompanied by the Princess and their three daughters, presided over the meeting of the National Eisteddfod, held at the Royal Albert Hall.
- 13.—By a collision in the Channel, off the Start Point, between the Greek steamer, "Andrea Vagliano," and the Commercial Steamship Company's steamer, "Norbiton," the latter vessel was sunk, with the loss of seven lives, which included the chief mate, his wife, and two children.

- 13.—Teemer beat Hanlan, in Toronto Bay, for the Sculling Championship of the United States and 1,000 dollars, by a length and a half.

The election for the Northwich Division of Cheshire, which had excited very keen interest, resulted in the return of Mr. J. T. Brunner, the Gladstonian candidate, by the large majority of 1,129 over Lord Henry Grosvenor, Liberal Unionist.

The Prince of Wales left London for Hamburg; and the Princess, accompanied by her three daughters, departed for Copenhagen, on a visit to her parents, the King and Queen of Denmark.

Termination of the Midland Railway strike.

- 14.—Great conflagration at Scutari, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus. Only three lives were lost, but 1,000 houses and two churches were destroyed, a number of people being rendered homeless.
- 16.—In presence of a very large concourse of spectators, Mr. Gladstone performed the ceremony of lowering the first cylinder of a new swing bridge across the River Dee.
- 17.—Very heavy thunderstorm in London, attended with perfect torrents of rain. Three men were killed by lightning at Paddington, and several others injured more or less seriously in same neighbourhood. The storm appears to have been general all over England.
- 19.—In the House of Lords, the Irish Land Bill, as finally amended by the House of Commons, was agreed to.
- Announcement in both Houses of Parliament that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland had proclaimed the Irish National League under Section 6 of the Irish Crimes Act.
- Total eclipse of the sun, which was well observed at Moscow and other places in the north of Europe.
- News reached Queenstown that the Inman steamer, "The City of Montreal," had been destroyed by fire four days after leaving New York. The 135 passengers and 110 crew on board, were all got into the steamer's eight boats, seven of which were soon after picked up by the steamer, "York City"; the eighth boat, containing thirteen persons, which could not then be found, was afterwards picked up by a German vessel, and conveyed to Falmouth.
- 22.—Israel Lipski executed in Newgate for the murder of Mrs. Angel at Whitechapel.
- 23.—Arrival of Prince Ferdinand, the recently elected Prince of Bulgaria, at Sofia.
- A very crowded and enthusiastic, but orderly, meeting was held at the Rotunda, in Dublin, to protest against the proclamation of the Irish National League.
- 24.—At York Races the Great Ebor Handicap

(1½ miles), value £1,000, was easily won by Mr. Brydges-Willyams's Silence, an outsider, who beat Oliver Twist and five others.

Serious rioting at Ostend, British fishing smacks being attacked by Belgian fishermen, who were fired upon by the military with fatal effect, two being killed, and four seriously wounded.

- 25.—The Lord Mayor of Dublin published a notice of his intention to disregard the section of the Crimes Act which makes it penal to publish the proceedings of any association which has been proclaimed.

Rev. Frederick Clarke, a Church of England clergyman, convicted at the Middlesex Sessions of obtaining several sums of money by false pretences, and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour.

- 26.—In the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone's motion against the Proclamation of the Irish National League under the Crimes Act, defeated by 272 votes against 195.

Terrible boating disaster off Ilfracombe, the excursion yacht "Monarch" being struck by a sudden squall, fourteen persons in all losing their lives.

Death of Lord Doneraile from hydrophobia, having been bitten by a tame fox.

- 28.—Boating accident on the Humber, five men being drowned.

At Christiania, the first prize for the International Cycling Club Championship was won by Mr. Fenlon, and the second by Mr. Mayes, both English.

- 29.—About 30,000 Foresters, including their relatives and friends, assembled at the Crystal Palace to celebrate the thirty-second annual fête of their Order.

- 30.—The polling for North Hunts resulted in the return of Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes, the Conservative candidate, by a majority of 286 votes over his Gladstonian Liberal opponent.

It was announced that Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had accepted the post of Chief English Commissioner on the Anglo-American Fisheries Arbitration Commission.

At Christiania, Mr. Fenlon, the English cyclist, succeeded in beating the 10,000 metre record of the world, completing the distance (upwards of six miles) in 18 min. 46 sec.

- 31.—Pranzini, the murderer of Madame de Montilly, her servant, and the latter's young child, in the Rue Montaigne, was guillotined at an early hour, in Paris.

A very sad bathing fatality occurred at Whitland Bay, on the southern coast of Cornwall, whereby three young ladies, who had been bathing with their mother, lost their lives.

OBITUARY FOR 1886-1887.

The death of **SAMUEL MORLEY**, on the 5th September, 1886, removed a familiar figure from political life and the platform of social and philanthropic movements. He was born at Hackney, in 1809, and, as a successful merchant and manufacturer, prepared the way for his later career of usefulness. Mr. Morley entered Parliament in 1865 as member for Nottingham, with which town, as the seat of the manufacture of hosiery, he had long been connected. He represented Bristol from 1868 to his death. Samuel Morley was a distinguished member of the Congregational Church, and to him, in a great measure, the Nonconformist body owes the fine hall in Farringdon Street devoted to their meetings, known as the Memorial Hall.

The 17th September was marked by the sad death of the **EARL OF DALKEITH**, from an accident while deer-stalking in the Highlands. Lord Dalkeith was in his twenty-sixth year, and heir to the Dukedom of Buccleuch.

On the 20th September died **Mrs. J. L. HATTON**, a well-known composer of songs, operettas, etc.

On the 27th October died **LORD MONKSWELL**, who, as Sir Robert Collier, was long member for Plymouth, and served the offices of Solicitor and Attorney-General. He retired from active practice at the bar to assume the office of paid member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Lord Monkswell was also well-known among artists as an amateur painter of exceptional powers.

The noted jockey, **FRED ARCHER**, the most successful rider known in the annals of the Turf, died by his own hand, during the delirium of fever, on the 8th November. Archer first came into notice as a jockey in the year 1872, by winning the Cesarewitch, from which time he pursued an almost uninterrupted course of success, having had no less than 2,749 winning mounts, among which were six for the Derby, and five for the St. Leger.

SERGEANT WILLIAM BALLANTYNE died on the 9th January, 1887. He was the son of a London police magistrate, was born in 1812, and called to the Bar as a member of the Inner Temple in 1834. Then for more than half-a-century he was a familiar figure in the Courts, had a large criminal practice, and defended, and on occasions prosecuted, in many "causes célèbres." He was created Serjeant-at-Law in 1856. Serjeant Ballantyne appeared for the Claimant in his action to recover the Tichborne estates in 1871; and in 1875 he departed for India, to defend the Gaikwar of Bundel from a charge of poisoning the English

resident, Colonel Phayre; for which the Serjeant received a retaining fee of 5,000 guineas. All this, and many other characteristic stories of his life and times, are told in the Serjeant's "Experiences," published 1882.

The sudden death of the **EARL OF IDDESLEIGH** (Sir Stafford Northcote), on the 12th January, 1887, was the subject of universal regret. He was born in 1818, educated at Eton and Balliol, and entered public life in Sir Robert Peel's second Administration, as private secretary to Mr. Gladstone, who was then President of the Board of Trade. He first entered Parliament in 1855, as member for Dudley, having, in the meantime, succeeded to the title and estates of his grandfather, seventh baronet. In 1868 he became member for North Devon, and continued to represent that constituency till he was made Earl of Idlesleigh in the year 1885. During the whole of that period he took a leading part in political affairs, sometimes in office, and sometimes in opposition. When Mr. Disraeli retired to the House of Lords, in 1876, Sir Stafford Northcote succeeded him as leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, in which position he won the esteem and goodwill of all parties, if he failed to retain the allegiance of the younger and more stirring spirits on his own side of the House.

Mrs. HENRY WOOD, a successful and popular novelist, was the daughter of a manufacturer at Worcester, of which the Cathedral Close, the provincial society, and the surrounding scenery, have been made familiar in one form or another to her readers. Mrs. Wood was an early contributor to periodical literature, and wrote for the "New Monthly Magazine" and "Bentley's Miscellany," of which Harrison Ainsworth was the presiding spirit, till the success of her most popular work, "East Lynne," published in 1861, launched her on an independent career. Mrs. Wood died on the 10th February, 1887, continuing her literary labours to the very end of her life.

On the 8th March died at New York, **HENRY WARD BEECHER**, the noted pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, Brooklyn, U.S., the charge of which he assumed in the year 1847. He was born A.D. 1813, and graduated at Amherst College, Mass., 1834. Mr. Beecher's last visit to England was paid in 1886, when he traversed the country, delivering his lectures with unabated energy.

MR. LYTTON SOTHERN, an actor of rising popularity in the class of characters represented by his late father, died on the 10th March, at the age of thirty-one years.

MR. JAMES WYLD, geographer to the Queen, and map publisher, died 17th April. He was born in 1812, and was generally known for the model of the "great globe" which he erected, and which stood in Leicester Square from 1851 to 1861. Mr. Wyld served in Parliament for many years as Liberal member for Bodmin; and as member of a City guild took an active part in the spread of technical education throughout the country.

On the 5th May died JAMES GRANT, who was born in Edinburgh in 1822. It is sad to think that we shall have no more stirring stories of love and war from the pen of this veteran and well-known novelist, who has catered for the chivalric instincts of more than one generation of young people. His first novel, "The Romance of War," was published in 1846, and his last was only just finished at the date of his death.

On the 7th May died SAMUEL COUSINS, retired R.A., an eminent engraver, born 9th May, 1801, in Exeter. His engravings after Reynolds, Lawrence, and more recent masters, such as Millais, Landseer, Leighton, and others, obtained for Mr. Cousins a well-deserved reputation and a modest fortune, the bulk of which he devoted to a fund for the benefit of poor and deserving artists.

JOHN WRIGHT OAKES, A.R.A., was born 9th July, 1820, at Middlewich, Cheshire, and early took a leading position among the Liverpool school of artists. In 1859 Mr. Oakes removed to the metropolis, and became a frequent exhibitor at the London galleries. His landscapes, chiefly of mountains, moorland, and coast scenes, are distinguished by high technical qualities, and marked with great sincerity and truth to Nature. Mr. Oakes died on the 8th July, 1887.

On the 25th July expired MR. HENRY MAYHEW, one of the juniors of a band of journalists and essayists who came into note about half-a-century ago. Mayhew was an early collaborator with Gilbert & Becket, and in 1841 the pair produced

the farce of "The Wandering Minstrel," in which the comic genius of Robson created quite a furore. The brothers Mayhew, Henry and Augustus, produced many popular works of fiction, marked by great cleverness and facile wit. Henry Mayhew was one of the originators of "Punch," and was associated with Douglas Jerrold, Mark Lemon, and a brilliant and versatile set of writers, who amused and satirised the town in the first half of Victoria's reign. But Henry Mayhew's best known and most substantial work is his "London Labour and the London Poor," originally published in numbers, in which the world of small peripatetic traders and the poor of London in general are drawn with great skill and minuteness, and in a sympathetic spirit.

The 27th July was marked by the death, at Worthing, of CAROLINE HEATH (Mrs. Wilson Barrett), an actress of merit, who sustained the characters of Anne Boleyn, Ophelia, Cordelia, etc., in Mr. Charles Kean's Shakespearean revivals at the Princess's, and who created the part of Jane Shore in the play of that name by Mr. Wills.

On the 14th August died RICHARD JEFFERIES, the author of "The Gamekeeper at Home," and of many contributions to periodical literature. Mr. Jefferies was a charming and devoted exponent of the inner life of the woods and fields, and of animated nature in general, of which his knowledge was intimate, and his love profound.

The death of MR. JOHN PALGRAVE SIMPSON, on the 19th August, removes another familiar figure from the stage. As dramatic author, critic, and contributor to periodical literature, Mr. Simpson's career was, on the whole, successful and productive. The best remembered of his pieces are "A Scrap of Paper," in which Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan were seen to advantage, and "Daddy Hardacre," in which Robson attracted the town to the Olympic. Mr. Simpson was born in Norwich in the year 1807, and graduated at Cambridge.



SKETCH OF THE PAST FIFTY YEARS.

THE old King had passed away in the grey dawn of a summer's morning; and the official watchers by his death-bed—the physician of the King's body, the head of the Church as the guardian of his spiritual state, and the Lord Chamberlain as the ruler of his household—had taken cognizance of the solemn fact. There was a hasty journey through the misty morning air, and while still the world was asleep, the three functionaries arrived at the gates of Kensington Palace, where all slumbered and slept. A sleeping Princess was there lying in all the freshness of her eighteen summers, whom these time-worn Councillors came to summon from the careless freedom of girlhood to dwell evermore in the fierce light that beats upon a throne. The Princess Victoria was awakened from her sleep, and in nightgown and slippers, with her hair hanging about her shoulders, she received the first homage of her new subjects with a flood of tears.

It was the beginning of a new age, of a productive epoch, all whose elements were already in existence, but not yet come into full activity. Vague expectations of coming prosperity along with the chivalric loyalty of the nation to its young Queen, gave a rose-coloured tint to the early days of the reign. But the condition of the country was hardly prosperous. There was much distress among the manufacturing population. Agriculturists had hardly grown reconciled to the new Poor Law. Trade was bad, and food was dear. A reformed Parliament was sitting, but the glowing anticipations which had been indulged in of great material benefits to follow for the population in general had been disappointed. The proletariat who had supported the middle classes in the agitation for reform, had found themselves not a pin the better for the change. Hence the spread of Chartism, thought wildly revolutionary in those days, although its spirit seems mild enough to us, and the extension of trade unionism, combined with riots, strikes, the destruction of machinery, and other symptoms of uneasiness in the body politic.

Through these sombre memories the life of the young Queen runs like a golden thread through a garment of duffel grey.

There is a grand Coronation in 1838, and a Royal Wedding on the 10th February, 1840, when Victoria espouses her cousin, Albert of Saxe Coburg; and when this event was followed by the birth of a Princess, there was general rejoicing throughout the country, with an increased feeling of security; for the possible accession of the Queen's uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, since King of Hanover, had been regarded with great fear and dislike by a large and influential portion of the nation.

As an agreeable and beneficial change, too, just before, the inauguration of the penny post had been welcomed, and people were writing and receiving congratulatory letters to each other, enclosed in those charming Mulready envelopes, which it is a pity they did not take greater care of. The envelope, indeed, came in with the penny post, for under the old system, people generally wrote on stiff Bath post, which was folded in a cunning manner, and addressed on the back, generally by an obliging M.P., in which case it was called a frank, and, with the signature of the franker appended, passed to its destination post-free. In a general way no one thought of writing a friendly letter without first securing a frank; and thus, letters were infrequent, but often better worth having than at present.

With the penny post, railways were coming in, and spreading through the land. Everywhere surveyors and engineers were at work. The great lines of communication were already established, but branches and extensions, new routes, and rival schemes, were continually being brought before Parliament, and combated fiercely by opposing interests.

Elections, too, had been fought with varying results. Lord Melbourne, the Queen's favourite Minister and adviser—most engaging and easy-going of Gallios—had been driven from office, and the more earnest and statesmanlike Peel had taken his place. Meantime small wars were going on: in China, without much success, till Pottinger sent the Celestials flying; and in Afghanistan, with the sad disastrous retreat from Cabul as the result. Ireland, too, was as much of a "crux" to politicians then, as

now: Daniel O'Connell was at work—the Repeal rent was flowing in merrily.

It was in the same year, 1842, that the grocers' shops were hung with startling placards, "The New Budget," and offering currants, raisins, and dozens of other articles at rates adjusted to reduced or abolished duties. There were then about twelve hundred items on which Customs duties were levied; and at one stroke Sir Robert Peel blotted out seven hundred and fifty from the list.

But the distress in the manufacturing districts was greater than ever. The Anti-Corn Law League was hard at work. Its publications ridiculed the Minister who, when the people asked for bread, gave them sugar-plums and currants.

The evil portents of the times culminate in the dark year of 1845, with bad harvests and continued rains. The unripened corn rotted in the fields, and in Ireland the terrible potato-blight swept away at one stroke the staple food of millions, and left the people starving. The gloom of the time was only relieved by the universal sympathy called forth and the noble efforts made to relieve the suffering people.

The Irish famine sealed the fate of the Corn Laws. Sir Robert Peel was one in whom humanity was stronger than mere statecraft. He nobly sacrificed his own proud position as chief of the then dominant party, and carried the repeal of the taxes on corn against the opposition of the bulk of his old followers. A small but distinguished band of statesmen, trained in the school of Peel, followed their leader into political exile, and were known as Peelites, till absorbed in the bulk of the great Liberal party.

Close upon the Repeal of the Corn Laws came the great railway mania, which came to a disastrous conclusion in 1847, with the fall of Hudson, the Railway King, and the crash of financial confusion. In the same year one phase of Irish agitation came to an end by the death of O'Connell, at Genoa, where he had wandered in search of health. The leader of the young Irish party, William Smith O'Brien, had already come to the front with his plans of organised insurrection, which came to a disastrous end, but which led to the Fenian organisation of later years.

With a great secession in the Church of Scotland, and the foundation of the Free Church in 1843, and the High Church movement at Oxford, which ended in the loss to the Church of England of such distinguished

members as Newman and Manning, the ecclesiastical world was sufficiently occupied in the first decade of Her Majesty's reign.

The literary record of the same period had been brilliant beyond example. Dickens had discovered a new world, and peopled it with the creations of his own bright fancies. Thackeray had written his best novel. A new generation of readers had arisen, for whom the glamour of Scott had begun to fade—of readers a little tired of the cold meat of former banquets, and hungering for more light and appetising fare.

In 1848 occurred another revolution in France, followed by convulsions all over the continent of Europe. Louis Philippe landed as an exile at Newhaven, and an era of disturbance followed, marked especially by a desperate contest between the National party in Hungary, headed by Kossuth, and the Austrian Crown. At this time Lord Palmerston was the most popular man in the country, being credited with strong sympathies on behalf of the Liberal party in Europe, while the Court was believed to cherish sentiments of an opposite character. When Russia took part against Hungary, Kossuth was driven from the country and took refuge in Constantinople. Attempts were made to extradite him, but the influence of England was used to secure his safety. It was when receiving a deputation to thank him for his services to the cause that Lord Palmerston made use of the phrase, "judicious bottle-holding," as applied to his management of the Padishah. This metaphor, derived from the customs of the prize ring, pleased the public fancy. Palmerston was depicted in an approving cartoon in "Punch" as "the judicious bottle-holder," with a straw or sprig in the corner of his mouth, supposed to be characteristic of the class affecting prize fights; and ever after this became the emblem of Palmerston in the comic papers, like Mr. Chamberlain's eye-glass, or Mr. Gladstone's collars at the present day.

Then in 1851 came the wonderful year of the first Great Exhibition, in which Prince Albert was the moving spirit, with the marvels of Paxton's glass palace. Never before had there been such a concourse of people in London. Popular caricaturists represented the provincial towns as deserted, and depicted Hodge and his wife and family in all their troubles among the unknown wonders of the Metropolis; while "Mossoo," and his difficulties with the English language and customs, was an equally favourite subject.

Before the year of the Exhibition closed, Napoleon had executed his coup d'état, and Lord Palmerston had hastened to approve it. This action was strongly reprobated by the Court, and Palmerston was removed from office by his chief, Lord John Russell. But he lost none of his popularity, and presently reappeared as Home Secretary in the well-meaning but weak Administration of Lord Aberdeen. Soon the country had drifted into the Crimean War, which, however, was extremely popular in the country. The Emperor of the French was now our good ally, and obtained the recognition of the proudest and most punctilious Court in Europe as the price of the sacrifices he imposed on France. The Battle of the Alma roused the enthusiasm of the country, who saw in it the confirmation of the continuance of the ancient prowess of the British soldier as manifested in former wars. The weapons, too, were the same, for the greater part of the infantry were armed with the ancient Brown Bess, although a portion of the Guards carried the new military rifle. The perilous victory of Inkerman followed, and the long and weary siege of Sebastopol, with the breakdown of our military administration, and the holocaust of the Government as general scapegoat. Palmerston was the man of the hour and assumed the reins of government, and presently had the satisfaction of despatching Lord John Russell to negotiate a treaty with the Czar.

There was little respite between the end of the Crimean War and the beginning of the Indian Mutiny which marked the end of the second decade of the Victorian age. During that period the discovery of gold in Australia in the year 1851 had given rise to a considerable emigration and to the rapid development of the colony. In our Indian Empire Oude had been annexed and part of Burmah.

In the same period two commanding figures had disappeared from the scene: Sir Robert Peel, who was killed by a fall from his horse in the year 1850; and the Duke of Wellington, who died full of years and honours at Walmer Castle in 1852. In political life the rise of Benjamin Disraeli to eminence as leader of the Conservative party was a noticeable fact. Mr. Disraeli, as a brilliant writer and novelist, had attracted some attention in the early part of his career, and the temporary disruption of the Tory party following the Repeal of the Corn Laws gave him the opportunity of

attaining political distinction. In conjunction with Lord George Bentinck, he reorganised the party and prepared for future triumphs; and the death of the latter left him the undisputed leader of his side of the House. In 1852 he came into office as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Derby's short-lived Administration.

The outbreak at Meerut on the 10th May, 1857, of a wide-spread mutiny among the Sepoys of the Indian army, with the complicity of many Indian Princes, who aimed at throwing off the English rule, strained the resources of England to the uttermost. The news of terrible massacres of women and children sent a thrill of rage and horror throughout the Kingdom, and the brave stand made by soldiers and civilians against overwhelming odds excited the admiration and gratitude of the whole English race. The mutiny was quelled, and punished with unsparing rigour; and with it came to an end the old "Company Raj," which was replaced by the direct authority of the English Crown.

The year 1861 was marked by the War of Secession in America, and the consequent blockade of the Southern ports. As the cotton supply of Lancashire was derived almost exclusively from the seceding States, the manufacture was completely paralysed; great distress resulted among the workpeople of the manufacturing districts, which, while alleviated as far as possible by private and public assistance, was endured by the sufferers with remarkable courage and resolution. At the same time the relations between the Governments of England and the United States were much strained; and the seizure of two Southern agents on board the *Trent*, an English mail steamer, almost led to a rupture between the two countries. The escape of the Southern cruiser *Alabama* from Liverpool, and the damage she caused among American trading vessels, was also a cause of irritation between the two countries, and led to the subsequent Geneva Conference, and the award of £3 200,000 damages to America.

On December 14th, 1861, the country was plunged into gloom by the announcement of the death of Prince Albert, in his forty-third year. The mourning for his death was universal, and the public feeling was intensified by the somewhat remorseful reflection that his excellent and amiable qualities, and the noble work he had effected in many directions, had been often scantily appreciated in his lifetime.

In the year 1863, the country was

rejoicing in the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the young and charming daughter of Denmark, whose popularity was assured from the moment of her appearance on English soil.

The Ministry of Lord Palmerston had conducted public affairs with popularity and success since the year 1859, with Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Russell as Foreign Secretary, and Sir G. C. Lewis, and latterly Sir George Grey, at the Home Office. But on the death of the veteran chief in 1865, Earl Russell took the reins of office. His Ministry lasted only into the following year, when the third Ministry of Lord Derby began with Mr. Disraeli as virtual chief. Our third period comes to an end in 1867 with the Abyssinian War in progress, and a second Reform Bill, extending the suffrage, and to some extent rearranging the constituencies, in course of being carried through Parliament by the united forces of the two great parties in the State. The elections of the following year, 1868, in their result left Mr. Disraeli in a considerable minority, and he resigned office before the meeting of Parliament, and Mr. Gladstone for the first time became Premier, and with a strong Administration at his back.

Meanwhile the centre of gravity in European affairs had been entirely changed by the aggrandisement of Prussia, which in 1866 had humbled Austria at Sadowa, and now assumed the undisputed supremacy of all Germany. The Emperor of the French, who had freed Italy, and whose effigy had long been laurel-crowned for the victories of Magenta and Solferino, after a long period of successful rule now found himself, worn with premature age and enfeebled with disease, confronted with the vital problem of his time. Napoleon, since the Crimean War, had been on the whole popular in England. There was a time, indeed, in 1859, when his acquisition of Nice had aroused the jealousy of this country, and sundry French colonels, by indiscreet brag-gadocio, had intensified the flame, when the Volunteer movement began, and an army of citizen soldiers sprang at once into existence; then, indeed, the Emperor was regarded as a chip of the old Buonaparte, who had kept the country on the alert during the early part of the century. But in the following year, 1860, the French Commercial Treaty was negotiated by Richard Cobden. It would be too much to say that the Emperor was the only Free-trader in France, for there was a select band of economists, with

Michel Chevalier at their head, who shared Mr. Cobden's views. But anyhow, the Emperor did not increase his popularity by the measure. And on our side, although light wines were cheapened and the interests of temperance perhaps served thereby, yet we failed to secure any great market for our manufactured goods. Then came the Emperor's unfortunate fiasco of the expedition to Mexico; and people ceased to believe in Napoleon's lucky star.

And yet the year 1870 opened in apparent tranquillity, with only the mutterings of the distant storm. On the 17th July, war was declared between Germany and France. On the 4th August, the Battle of Wissemburg was fought, and lost by the French; and one disaster followed another, till the crowning blow of the capitulation of the French army at Sedan. Then followed the downfall of the Imperial Government; the Republic was proclaimed in Paris, and the ex-Empress took refuge in England. By the 19th September, Paris was completely invested, and on the 7th October, Gambetta escaped from the beleaguered city in a balloon, and alighted near Amiens, to make his way to Tours and organise the gallant but futile campaign that followed.

To outward appearance, the great war had no unfavourable effect on English interests. While the two nations were fighting, we were trading and making money all round. But the consolidation of the German Empire and its preponderating influence in Europe, brought dangers and embarrassments in their train, which have hampered the course of English policy on many occasions.

In the winter of 1871, national sympathy and alarm were excited by the dangerous illness of the Prince of Wales; and when his happy recovery was celebrated by a service at St. Paul's, attended by the Queen and Prince, and nearly all the notables of the kingdom, the whole country united in the thanksgiving.

In 1873, the death of the ex-Emperor Napoleon, at Chislehurst, extinguished for the time the chances of an Imperial restoration in France. In the following year, on Mr. Gladstone's initiative, Parliament was dissolved, and the elections resulted in a substantial majority for the Conservative party. And thus came to an end an Administration which had lasted for more than five years, and that had passed many important measures—the Education Act especially, without dispute a measure of great public utility.

The new Ministry enjoyed even a longer

lease of power, and continued in office for six years and a quarter; a period marked by many foreign complications, and by the Turko-Russian War, the result of which left Constantinople at the mercy of the Czar. The pretensions of Russia made a war with England imminent, and Lord Beaconsfield had issued orders for an Indian contingent to rendezvous at Malta, when a *modus vivendi* was arrived at between the two Powers; and Lord Beaconsfield accompanied Lord Salisbury to the Congress of Berlin with an agreement on points of dispute already in his pocket. From Berlin Lord Beaconsfield returned, bringing, in his own words, "Peace with Honour." His popularity seemed at the moment boundless. But his spirited, or as some termed it adventurous policy, had inspired mistrust among the powers of the commercial world. Trade had ceased to expand with its former elasticity, and Irish troubles loomed in the distance.

Thus the new Parliament of 1880 met, with Mr. Gladstone as Prime Minister. The new Administration is chiefly noticeable for having passed, in friendly conjunction with the Conservative party, a drastic rearrangement of constituencies, while, at the same time, the county franchise was assimilated to that of the boroughs.

In 1881 Lord Beaconsfield died; but his extraordinary personal influence seems to survive in the Primrose League, one of the most successful political organisations of modern times.

The after-course of political events need hardly be traced, as it must be fresh in the minds of all. There only remains to mention the Egyptian War of 1882; the disasters of Hicks Pasha in the Soudan; and the total destruction of his army, which was accompanied by many English correspondents who shared its fate. The unsatisfactory Soudan campaign; Gordon's death at Khartoum; the continued occupation of Egypt, are part of the current history of the times; and the fate of the last of the Egyptian garrisons, and Emin Pasha, their gallant leader, is still uncertain, as well as that of the expedition which, under Henry Stanley's guidance, is penetrating the Dark Continent for their rescue.

The changes of the past fifty years have perhaps been more momentous than during any similar period of the history of the human race. Ocean steamers, the network of railway communication, the electric telegraph, all these are the work of the past half-century. As a set-off, we have

weapons of destruction of far more terrible force, floating iron castles in the place of the beautiful war-ships of old, torpedoes, and all kinds of machines of diabolic ingenuity, for the purposes of destruction. Geology has become a science, Natural History almost a new revelation. Chemistry has made enormous progress, and even aspires to disclose the mysteries of being and creation. The savant is like the once famous Sapeur to whom nothing is sacred. And yet how numerous are the amenities of life we owe to this same progress that is levelling all the old landmarks! Photography is one of its gifts, a useful hand-maid of Science, and in a certain way of Art, although in this way the results are often hideous and disappointing. At the beginning of our half-century, tinder-boxes were still in use, and brimstone matches, for the recently invented phosphorus matches were deemed dangerous innovations by the old-fashioned people of those days. Now we strike so many matches of all kinds, that the manufacture of them and the boxes that hold them has become a great industry—although as to the "vesuvians," we may wish the inventor of them had never been born. The quill was the chief instrument of writing half-a-century ago, and writing was an art, with its professors, and triumphs of skill in flourishes, spread-eagles, swans, and other devices; now we scribble away with innumerable nibs, and as a rule our handwriting is detestable.

Scientific progress may be accompanied by decline in Art; but it is safe to say that except in landscape, English Art at the beginning of our half-century was hardly capable of further decline. But it would not be possible to say the same now, as we have many competent artists in their various lines; and if we are not living in the golden age of Art, at least it is one that is well gilded. In music, too, if there are no great triumphs to record, there has been a wonderful growth of appreciation and general knowledge. In our amateur choirs, if in nothing else, we may claim to take the lead. And everywhere music and the love of music are spreading.

To open out at any length the literary record of the age is beyond our scope. The greatest names are gone, but they have left behind a host of earnest, industrious workers, among whom perhaps are stars that will shine with greater lustre in the firmament of the coming age.

CALENDAR FOR 1888.

Bissextile, or Leap-year.

JANUARY.

1	S	1st Sunday after Christmas. Circumcision.
2	M	General Wolfe born, 1737; died, 13th Sept., 1759.
3	T	Joseph Wedgwood died, 1798. [1769.]
4	W	Roger Ascham died, 1568.
5	Th	Duke of York died, 1827.
6	F	Epiphany.
7	S	St. Dismas's Day.
8	S	1st Sunday after Epiphany. Prince Albert
9	M	Plough Monday. [Victor born, 1864.]
10	T	Penny Post introduced, 1840.
11	W	Sir Hans Sloane died, 1753.
12	Th	Le Mans captured, 1871.
13	F	St. Hilary.
14	S	Times newspaper established, 1788.
15	S	2nd Sunday after Epiphany.
16	M	Battle of Corunna, 1809.
17	T	Battle of Falkirk, 1746.
18	W	Old Twelfth Day.
19	Th	William Congreve, dramatist, died, 1798;
20	F	Loss of <i>Kapuska</i> , 1867. [born, 1809.]
21	S	St. Agnes. Louis XVI. beheaded, 1793.
22	S	3rd Sunday after Epiphany.
23	M	Duke of Kent died, 1820.
24	T	Frederick the Great born, 1712.
25	W	Conversion of St. Paul.
26	Th	General Gordon killed at Khartoum, 1885.
27	F	Adam Sedgwick, geologist, died, 1873.
28	S	Capitulation of Paris, 1871.
29	S	Septuagesima Sunday.
30	M	Charles I. beheaded, 1649.
31	T	Cape Horn first doubled, 1615.

MOON'S PHASES.

6th.	Last Quarter	..	11A.	43m.	Morning.
13th.	New Moon	..	8	30	Morning.
21st.	First Quarter	..	4	49	Morning.
29th.	Full Moon	..	11	19	Afternoon.

FEBRUARY.

1	W	St. Bridget. Partridge and pheasant shoot.
2	Th	Purification. Oondlemas. [ing ends.]
3	F	Marquis of Salisbury born, 1830.
4	S	Panic on Stock Exchange, 1887.
5	S	Sexagesima Sunday. St. Agatha.
6	M	Queen Anne born, 1665; died, 1st August, 1714.
7	T	Charles Dickens born, 1812. [1714.]
8	W	Mary Queen of Scots beheaded, 1587.
9	Th	Bishop Hooper burnt, 1555.
10	F	Queen Victoria married, 1840.
11	S	William Shenstone, poet, died, 1763; born, 1714.
12	S	Quinquagesima Sunday.
13	M	Massacre of Glencoe, 1691.
14	T	St. Valentine. Shrove Tuesday.
15	W	Ash Wednesday.
16	Th	Battle of Cape St. Vincent, 1797.
17	F	Duchess of Albany born, 1861.
18	S	Martin Luther died, 1546.
19	S	1st Sunday in Lent.
20	M	Princess Louise of Wales born, 1867.
21	T	Cardinal Newman born, 1801.
22	W	French Revolution, 1849.
23	Th	Earthquakes in Riviera, 1897.
24	F	St. Matthias, Apostle and Martyr.
25	S	Karl of Essex beheaded, 1601.
26	S	2nd Sunday in Lent.
27	M	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow born, 1807.
28	T	George Buchanan, hist., d., 1582; b., 1506.
29	W	Edward Cave (of <i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>) born, 1662; died, 1754.

MOON'S PHASES

4th.	Last Quarter	..	7A.	26m.	Afternoon.
11th.	New Moon	..	11	53	Afternoon.
20th.	First Quarter	..	1	50	Morning.
27th.	Full Moon	..	11	58	Morning.

MARCH.

1	Th	St. David.
2	F	St. Chad.
3	S	Copley Fielding died, 1855.
4	S	3rd Sunday in Lent.
5	M	Covent Garden Theatre burnt, 1856.
6	T	Michael Angelo born, 1474.
7	W	St. Perpetua.
8	Th	Battle of Aboukir, 1801.
9	F	Murder of Rizzio, 1566.
10	S	Prince of Wales married, 1863.
11	S	4th Sunday in Lent.
12	M	King James landed at Kinsale, 1609.
13	T	Accession of Czar, 1881.
14	W	King Humbert of Italy born, 1844.
15	Th	Julius Cæsar assassinated, a.c. 44.
16	F	Duchess of Kent died, 1861.
17	S	St. Patrick's Day.
18	S	5th Sunday in Lent. Princess Louise born.
19	M	Sir John Denham, poet, died, 1668. [1648.]
20	T	Sir Isaac Newton died, 1727; born, 1643.
21	W	St. Benedict.
22	Th	Emperor of Germany born, 1797.
23	F	Emperor Paul of Russia assassinated, 1801.
24	S	Queen Elizabeth died, 1603.
25	S	Palm Sunday. Annunciation. Lady Day.
26	M	Duke of Cambridge born, 1819.
27	T	American Civil War began, 1861.
28	W	Duke of Albany died, 1884.
29	Th	Maundy Thursday.
30	F	Good Friday.
31	S	Des Cartes, philosopher, born, 1596; died, 1650.

MOON'S PHASES.

5th.	Last Quarter	..	3A.	26m.	Morning.
13th.	New Moon	..	4	21	Afternoon.
20th.	First Quarter	..	8	58	Afternoon.
27th.	Full Moon	..	10	7	Afternoon.

APRIL.

1	S	Easter Sunday.
2	M	Easter Monday. Bank Holiday.
3	T	Easter Tuesday.
4	W	St. Ambrose.
5	Th	Robert Bakke, Founder of Sunday Schools.
6	F	Dr. Busby died, 1698; born, 1604. [d., 1811.]
7	S	Duke of Albany born, 1853.
8	S	Low Sunday.
9	M	Lord Bacon died, 1626.
10	T	Prince Eugene died, 1763.
11	W	Napoleon abdicated, 1814.
12	Th	Lord Rodney's Naval Victory, 1782.
13	F	Fort Sumter taken, 1861.
14	S	Princess Beatrice born, 1857.
15	S	2nd Sunday after Easter.
16	M	Battle of Orléans, 1746.
17	T	Benjamin Franklin died, 1790.
18	W	Judge Jeffries died, 1699.
19	Th	Lord Beaconsfield died, 1881.
20	F	Blake destroyed Spanish Fleet, 1657.
21	S	Baroness Burdett-Coutts born, 1814.
22	S	3rd Sunday after Easter.
23	M	Shakespeare died, 1616.
24	T	Anthony Trollope born, 1815.
25	W	St. Mark, Ev. and M. Princess Alice born, 1843.
26	Th	Lord Lyons born, 1817.
27	F	James Bruce, traveller, died, 1794.
28	S	Martyr of the Bounty, 1790.
29	S	4th Sunday after Easter.
30	M	Battle of Fontenoy, 1745.

MOON'S PHASES.

3rd.	Last Quarter	..	0A.	41m.	Afternoon.
11th.	New Moon	..	9	8	Morning.
19th.	First Quarter	..	11	53	Morning.
26th.	Full Moon	..	6	23	Morning.

MAY.

1	T	SS. Philip and James. Duke of Connaught
2	W	St. Athanasius. [born, 1860.
3	Th	Invention of the Cross.
4	F	Battle of Tewkesbury, 1471. [born, 1826.
5	S	N. Bonaparte died, 1821. Empress Eugénie
6	S	Regation Sunday. Dublin Murders, 1862.
7	M	Lord Brougham died, 1868; born, 1778.
8	T	Le Sage born, 1668; author of <i>Gil Blas</i> .
9	W	Colonel Blod's attempt on Crown Jewels.
10	Th	Ascension Day. Indian Mutiny, 1857. [1871.
11	F	Mr. Percival shot, 1812.
12	S	Earl of Strafford beheaded, 1641.
13	S	1st Sunday after Ascension. Old May Day.
14	M	Queen opened East End Palace, 1387.
15	T	Battle of Hexham, 1463.
16	W	Liverpool Exhibition opened by Princess
17	Th	Dr. Jenner born, 1749. [Louise, 1837.
18	F	King Edward, Martyr, murdered, 979.
19	S	St. Dunstan. Anne Boleyn beheaded, 1536.
20	S	Whit Sunday.
21	M	Whit Monday. Bank Holiday.
22	T	First Battle of St. Albans, 1455.
23	W	Battle of Ramillies, 1706.
24	Th	Queen Victoria born, 1819.
25	F	Princess Christian born, 1846.
26	S	Handel Commemoration, 1784.
27	S	Trinity Sunday.
28	M	Blantyre Colliery Disaster, 1887.
29	T	Restoration of King Charles II., 1660.
30	W	Peter Paul Rubens died, 1640; born, 1577.
31	Th	Corpus Christi.

MOON'S PHASES.

2nd.	Last Quarter	..	11A.	47m.	Afternoon.
11th.	New Moon	..	1	24	Morning.
18th.	First Quarter	..	11	5	Afternoon.
25th.	Full Moon	..	1	40	Afternoon.

JULY.

1	S	5th Sunday after Trinity.
2	M	Sir Robert Peel died, 1850.
3	T	Dog Days begin.
4	W	Declaration of American Independence, 1776.
5	Th	Battle of Wagram, 1809.
6	F	Princess Victoria of Wales born, 1868.
7	S	Richard B. Sheridan died, 1816; born, 1751.
8	S	6th Sunday after Trinity.
9	M	Jubilee Review, Aldershot, 1887.
10	T	John Calvin born, 1509; died, 1564.
11	W	Wm. E. L. Forster born, 1818; died, 1883.
12	Th	Crimes evacuated, 1856.
13	F	Thames Embankment opened, 1870.
14	S	Bastille stormed, 1789.
15	S	7th Sunday after Trinity. St. Swithun.
16	M	Battle of Belgrade, 1717.
17	T	Franco-German War declared, 1870.
18	W	Petrarch died, 1374; born, 1304.
19	Th	Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz born, 1812.
20	F	John Playfair, geologist, died, 1819.
21	S	Robert Burns died, 1796.
22	S	8th Sunday after Trinity.
23	M	Jubilee Naval Review, 1887.
24	T	Window Tax repealed, 1851. [born, 1797.
25	W	St. James, Ap. and M. Duchess of Cambridge
26	Th	St. Anne. Earl of Rochester died, 1680.
27	F	Battle of Talavera, 1809.
28	S	Abraham Cowley died, 1667.
29	S	9th Sunday after Trinity.
30	M	Captain Cook sailed on first voyage, 1768.
31	T	Richard Savage, poet, died, 1743.

MOON'S PHASES.

1st.	Last Quarter	..	3A.	53m.	Morning.
9th.	New Moon	..	6	17	Morning.
16th.	First Quarter	..	0	13	Afternoon.
23rd.	Full Moon	..	5	45	Morning.
30th.	Last Quarter	..	8	30	Afternoon.

JUNE.

1	F	Prince Louis Napoleon killed, 1879.
2	S	Garibaldi died, 1862; born, 1807.
3	S	1st Sun. after Trin. Prince George of Wales
4	M	Gen. Lord Wolseley born, 1833. [born, 1865.
5	T	St. Boniface.
6	W	Gordon Riots, 1780.
7	Th	Robert Bruce died, 1329.
8	F	Sir Joseph Paxton died, 1865.
9	S	Charles Dickens died, 1870.
10	S	2nd Sunday after Trinity.
11	M	St. Barnabas, Apostle and Martyr.
12	T	Dr. Arnold of Rugby died, 1842.
13	W	St. Anthony of Padua.
14	Th	Battle of Marengo, 1800.
15	F	Magna Charta sealed, 1215.
16	S	Duke of Marlborough died, 1722; born, 1650.
17	S	3rd Sunday after Trinity.
18	M	Battle of Waterloo, 1815.
19	T	C. H. Spurgeon born, 1834.
20	W	Queen's Accession, 1837.
21	Th	Longest Day. Battle of Vittoria, 1813.
22	F	Russians crossed Danube, 1798.
23	S	Battle of Plassey, 1757.
24	S	4th Sunday after Trinity. St. John Baptist.
25	T	South Kensington Museum opened, 1855.
26	T	Francis Pizarro killed, 1511.
27	W	Dr. Dodd executed, 1777.
28	Th	Queen Victoria crowned, 1838.
29	F	St. Peter, Apostle and Martyr.
30	S	Archibald, Earl of Argyll, beheaded, 1685.

MOON'S PHASES.

1st.	Last Quarter	..	0A.	53m.	Afternoon.
9th.	New Moon	..	4	34	Afternoon.
17th.	First Quarter	..	6	50	Morning.
23rd.	Full Moon	..	9	8	Afternoon.

AUGUST.

1	W	Lammas Day.
2	Th	Battle of Sedan, 1870.
3	F	Battle of Blenheim, 1704.
4	S	Battle of Evesham, 1266.
5	S	10th Sunday after Trinity.
6	M	Bank Holiday. Duke of Edinburgh b., 1844.
7	T	Queen Caroline died, 1821.
8	W	Katavia captured, 1811.
9	Th	Earl Sidney born, 1805.
10	F	Right Hon. G. J. Goschen born, 1831.
11	S	Dog Days end.
12	S	11th Sunday after Trinity.
13	M	Old Lammas Day. Grouse shooting begins.
14	T	Dean Buckland, geologist, died, 1856.
15	W	Assumption. Sir Walter Scott born, 1771.
16	Th	Ben Jonson died, 1637.
17	F	Matthew Boulton, engineer, died, 1809.
18	S	Battle of Gravelotte, 1870.
19	S	12th Sunday after Trinity.
20	M	Blackcock shooting begins.
21	T	Battle of Vimiera, 1803.
22	W	Battle of Bosworth Field, 1485.
23	Th	Duke of Buckingham assassinated, 1628.
24	F	St. Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyr.
25	S	Battle of Crécy, 1346.
26	S	13th Sunday after Trinity. Prince Albert b.,
27	M	Jas. Thomson, poet, d., 1748; b., 1700. [1819.
28	T	Colchester surrendered, 1048.
29	W	Battle of Aspromonte, 1802.
30	Th	Convention of Cintra, 1803.
31	F	John Bunyan died, 1683.

MOON'S PHASES.

7th.	New Moon	..	6A.	21m.	Afternoon.
14th.	First Quarter	..	4	44	Afternoon.
21st.	Full Moon	..	4	20	Afternoon.
29th.	Last Quarter	..	2	18	Afternoon.

SEPTEMBER.

1	S	Partridge Shooting begins.
2	S	14th Sunday after Trinity. Fire of London. [1666]
3	M	Oliver Cromwell died, 1658.
4	T	French Republic declared, 1870.
5	W	Cardinal Richelieu born, 1535.
6	Th	Shakespeare's Jubilee, 1769.
7	F	Battle of Borodino, 1812.
8	S	Burwell Fire, 1727.
9	S	15th Sunday after Trinity.
10	M	Battle of Pinky, 1547.
11	T	Battle of Malplaquet, 1709.
12	W	Obelisk raised on Thames Embankment, 1878.
13	Th	Death of General Wolfe at Quebec, 1759.
14	F	Holy Cross Day.
15	S	Liverpool and Manchester Railway opened, 1825.
16	S	16th Sunday after Trinity. [1830.]
17	M	John Payne Collier died, 1833.
18	T	London & Birmingham Raily. opened, 1838.
19	W	Battle of Poitiers, 1356.
20	Th	Delhi captured, 1857.
21	F	St. Matthew, Apostle, Evangelist, & Martyr.
22	S	Battle of Zutphen, 1540.
23	S	17th Sunday after Trinity.
24	M	Samuel Butler died, 1680; born, 1612.
25	T	Siege of Paris commenced, 1870.
26	W	Lucknow relieved, 1857.
27	Th	George Cruikshank born, 1792; died, 1878.
28	F	Strasbourg capitulated, 1870.
29	S	Michaelmas Day. St. Michael & All Angels.
30	S	18th Sunday after Trinity.

MOON'S PHASES.

6th.	New Moon	.. 4 ^h . 56m. Morning.
12th.	First Quarter	.. 10 0 Afternoon.
20th.	Full Moon	.. 5 24 Morning.
28th.	Last Quarter	.. 8 30 Morning.

NOVEMBER.

1	Th	All Saints.
2	F	All Souls.
3	S	Columbia Market opened, 1871.
4	S	23rd Sunday after Trinity.
5	M	Battle of Inkerman, 1854.
6	T	Princess Charlotte died, 1817.
7	W	Battle of Prague, 1620.
8	Th	Capture of Slidell and Mason on the Trent.
9	F	Prince of Wales b., 1841. Lord Mayor's Day.
10	S	Martin Luther born, 1483; d., 18 Feb., 1546.
11	S	24th Sunday after Trinity. Martinmas.
12	M	Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell died, 1865.
13	T	George Fox, Quaker, died, 1690; born, 1624.
14	W	Marriage of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn.
15	Th	Domesday Book completed, 1086. [1532.]
16	F	John Bright born, 1811.
17	S	Accession of Queen Elizabeth, 1558.
18	S	25th Sunday after Trinity.
19	M	Fire at Hampton Court Palace, 1886.
20	T	St. Edmund.
21	W	Princess Royal born, 1840.
22	Th	S. Cecilia.
23	F	Old Martinmas Day.
24	S	Great Eruption of Mount Vesuvius, 1759.
25	S	26th Sunday after Trinity.
26	M	Princess Maud of Wales born, 1868.
27	T	Duchess of Teck born, 1833.
28	W	Cardinal Wolsey died, 1530.
29	Th	Great Sortie from Paris, 1870.
30	F	St. Andrew, Apostle and Martyr.

MOON'S PHASES.

4th.	New Moon	.. 0 ^h . 2m. Morning.
10th.	First Quarter	.. 4 16 Afternoon.
18th.	Full Moon	.. 3 18 Afternoon.
26th.	Last Quarter	.. 5 21 Afternoon.

OCTOBER.

1	M	Pheasant Shooting begins.
2	T	Gunpowder explosion, Regent's Canal, 1874.
3	W	Robert Barclay of Urie, died, 1690; b., 1649.
4	Th	B. W. Procter died, 1874.
5	F	Lord Chelmsford died, 1878.
6	S	St. Faith.
7	S	19th Sunday after Trinity.
8	M	Great Fire at Chicago, 1871.
9	T	St. Denis.
10	W	Kosciuszko defeated, 1794.
11	Th	Old Michaelmas Day.
12	F	St. Wilfrid.
13	S	Murat shot, 1815.
14	S	20th Sunday after Trinity.
15	M	Prince Alfred of Edinburgh born, 1874.
16	T	Houses of Parliament burnt, 1834.
17	W	Duchess of Edinburgh born, 1853.
18	Th	St. Luke, Evangelist.
19	F	Battle of Leipzig, 1813.
20	S	Thomas Hughes (Tom Brown) born, 1823.
21	S	21st Sunday after Trin. Battle of Trafalgar.
22	M	Captain Mayne Reid died, 1883. [1805.]
23	T	Battle of Edgehill, 1642.
24	W	Edict of Nantes revoked, 1685.
25	Th	Battle of Agincourt, 1415. George III. Jubilee, 1803.
26	F	Wreck of Royal Charter, 1859. [lee, 1803.]
27	S	Capitulation of Metz, 1870.
28	S	22nd Sunday after Trinity. SS. Simon and John Leech died, 1864. [Jude.]
29	M	Léon Gambetta born, 1838; died, 31st Dec., 1882.
30	T	All Hallows Eve.
31	W	

MOON'S PHASES.

5th.	New Moon	.. 2 ^h . 34m. Afternoon.
12th.	First Quarter	.. 5 29 Morning.
19th.	Full Moon	.. 9 9 Afternoon.
26th.	Last Quarter	.. 1 56 Morning.

DECEMBER.

1	S	Princess of Wales born, 1844.
2	S	Advent Sunday.
3	M	Fire at Warwick Castle, 1871.
4	T	Thomas Carlyle born, 1795.
5	W	Dumas père died, 1870.
6	Th	St. Nicholas.
7	F	Algernon Sidney executed, 1683.
8	S	Mary, Queen of Scots, born, 1542.
9	S	2nd Sunday in Advent.
10	M	King Leopold died, 1885.
11	T	Closetime for Grouse and Black Game begins.
12	W	Nicholas Rowe, Laureate, born, 1673.
13	Th	Fenian Explosion at Clerkenwell, 1867.
14	F	Prince Albert died, 1861. Princess Alice
15	S	Sarah Trimmer died, 1810. [died, 1878.]
16	S	3rd Sunday in Advent.
17	M	Thomas Guy died, 1724.
18	T	Slavery abolished in United States, 1862.
19	W	Toulon recaptured by the French, 1793.
20	Th	Alfred Bunn, dramatist, died, 1860.
21	F	St. Thomas.
22	S	George Eliot died, 1880.
23	S	4th Sunday in Advent.
24	M	W. M. Thackeray died, 1863.
25	W	Christmas Day.
26	W	St. Stephen, Martyr. Bank Holiday.
27	Th	St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.
28	F	Innocent's Day.
29	S	W. E. Gladstone born, 1809.
30	S	1st Sunday after Christmas.
31	M	Léon Gambetta died, 1882.

MOON'S PHASES.

3rd.	New Moon	.. 10 ^h . 6m. Morning.
10th.	First Quarter	.. 6 46 Morning.
18th.	Full Moon	.. 10 41 Morning.
26th.	Last Quarter	.. 6 0 Morning.

Golden Number... .. 8.
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Solar Cycle 21
Dominical Letters A G

Roman Indiction 1
Julian Period 6801

